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SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO

The Method of St. Ignatius.

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VOL II.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR,

ACCORDING

TO THE METHOD OF ST. IGNATIUS.

Revised by a Jesuit Father.

"See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee."

VOL. II.

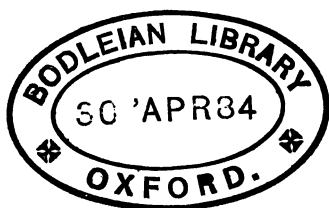
JULY TO DECEMBER.

London:

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON,
23, King Edward Street, City;
AND DERBY.

1883.

1401 . 2 . 2 .



Nihil obstat.

ROBERTUS WHITTY, S.J.,

CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

Imprimatur.

HENRICUS EDUARDUS,

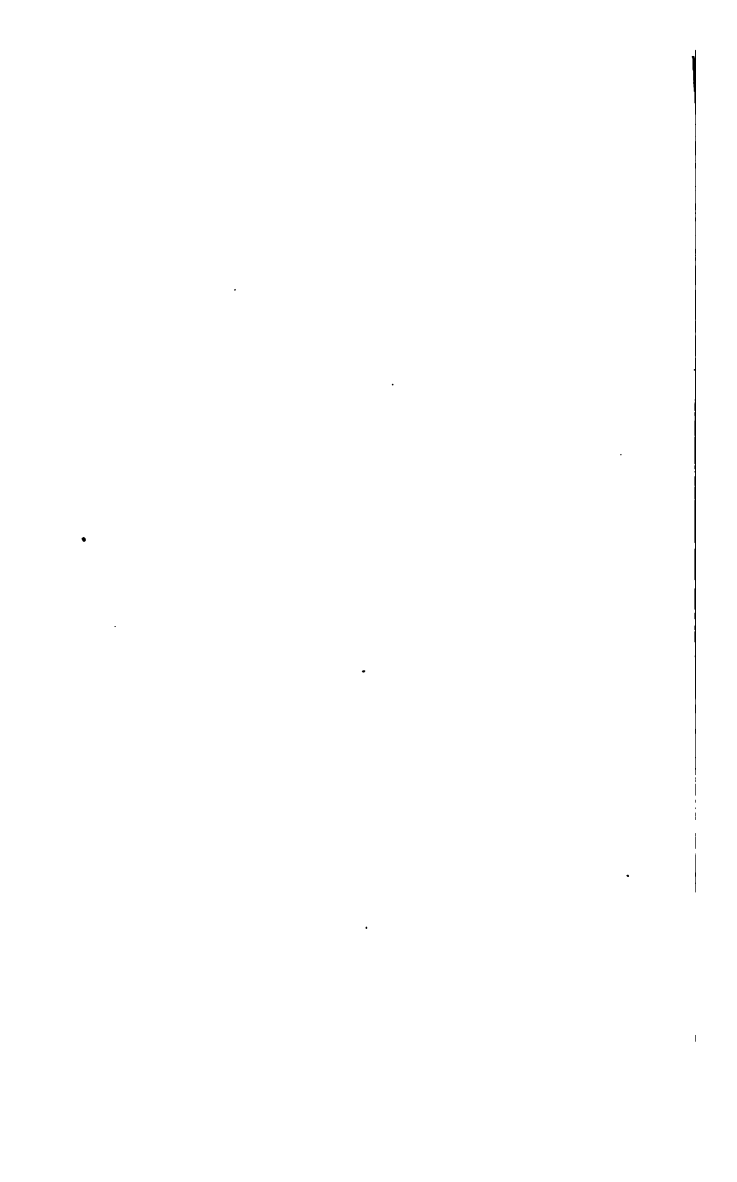
CARDINALIS ARCHIEP. WESTMONAST.

Die 27 Maii, 1882.

NOTICE.



These Meditations are almost entirely an abridged translation of “La Vie de N. S. Jésus Christ Méditée,” by the author of “Avis Spirituels.” Some few of the Meditations are exceptions.



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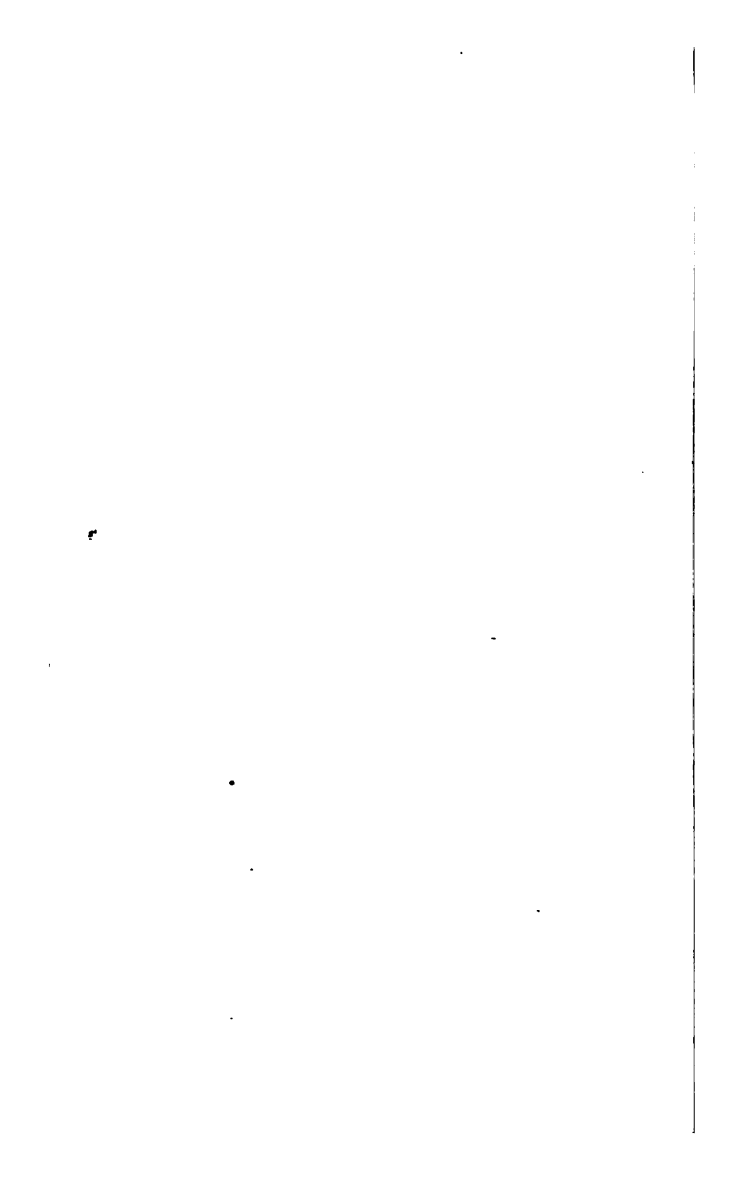
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SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

J U L Y .



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Nihil obstat.

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HENRICUS EDUARDUS,

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Die 27 Maii, 1882.

INTRODUCTION.

The object of this little book is to supply a want long felt in Religious Communities and Schools, of a meditation book, published at such a price that each of the members may possess their own copy.

To do this, great brevity has been rendered necessary, and in order to economize space the *preludes* of each meditation are not given.

Persons are expected to make their own preludes, according to the method of St. Ignatius.

Ordinarily speaking, the first prelude is the composition, in the mind's eye, of the place where the event on which we are about to meditate took place. For instance, if we are to meditate on the conversion of St. Mary Magdalene, we imagine we see the supper room where she washed our Lord's feet.

When the subject of the meditation is abstract, such as eternity, faith, and the like, the best prelude is to place ourselves in spirit at the feet of our Lord, etc.

The prelude is intended to help us to realize the meditation.

In the second prelude we ask the grace we want, and again, *ordinarily* speaking, we ask the grace suggested to us by the meditation. For instance, if the subject of our meditation be prayer, we ask the grace to pray well.

The preparation for meditation is two-fold, and consists, first, of the remote, and secondly, of the immediate.

The remote preparation consists (1) in reading over the points of our meditation the evening before the day on which we are to make it; (2) in recalling to the mind the subject before going to sleep, so as to let it be, if possible, the last thought; (3) in doing the same when we awake.

The immediate preparation consists in

1. Placing ourselves in a special way in the presence of God. St. Ignatius

recommends that we stand for the space of an Our Father.

2. In a prayer to ask grace to make the meditation well, and in this prayer to make a little act of self-humiliation, and be sure to invoke our Lady and St. Joseph.

Then follow the preludes and the points of the meditation.

After reading each point we should reflect.

If we find in the first or second point sufficient matter for meditation, we are not obliged to go on further.

From our reflection should spring affections; for instance, a reflection on our Lord's sufferings should bring forth from the heart love and gratitude.

At the end of the meditation we should make a colloquy, that is, converse with God in prayer heart to heart. We give one as a specimen, supposing that our subject has been on the Circumcision of our Lord.

Dear Lord, Thou didst suffer so much for me; give me courage to suffer a little for Thee. I am such a coward, so afraid

of pain; help me, my Jesus. I want to begin this day well, to learn to love Thee more, to serve Thee better. I can do nothing without Thy help and grace. Help me, dear Lord, to overcome that fault . . . which is so hard for me. By Thy grace I resolve this day to be patient with . . . or to obey that order to do . . . which I so much dislike. I will try and recall this thought during the day,—the first tears of Jesus.

In a meditation of half-an-hour the colloquy should not be less than five minutes.

The colloquy should end with a resolution, and this should not be a vague one, such as, "I will try always to be charitable," but "I will speak charitably of such-or-such a person, on such-or-such an occasion," and so on.

Meditation should be followed by reflection, which can be made while sitting or walking about. In it we

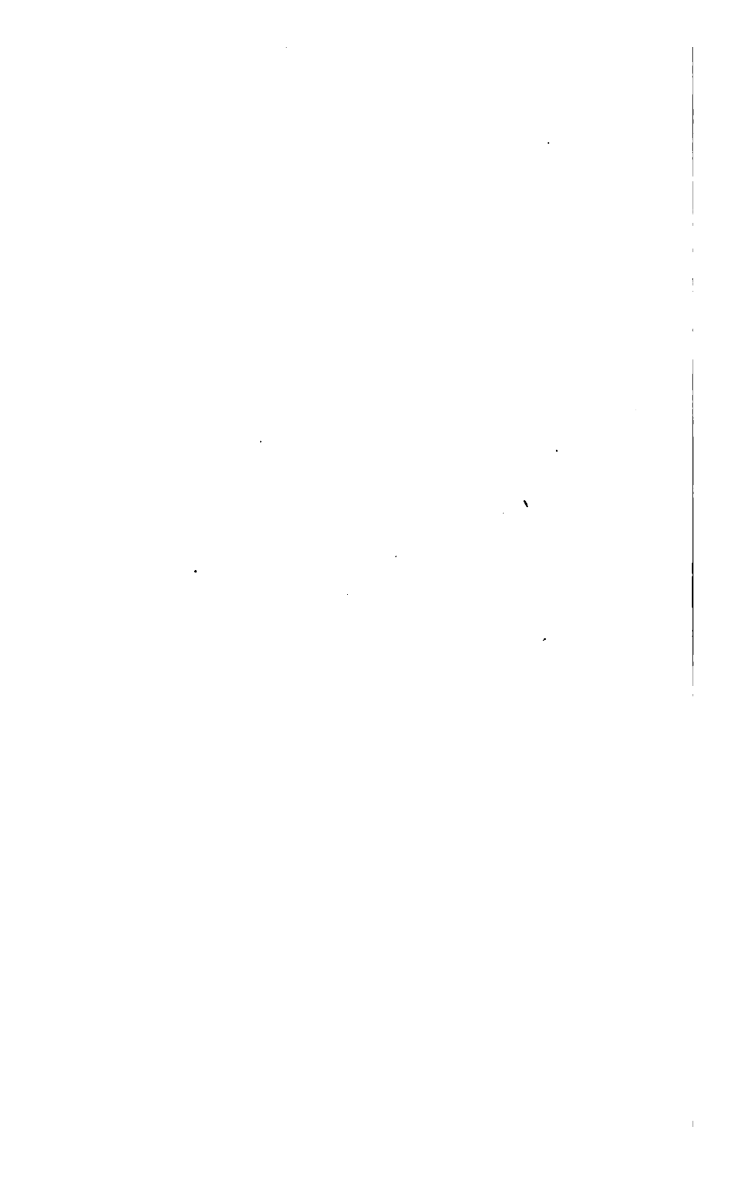
1. Examine whether we have kept the rules which we have just given, and also if we made our preludes, and took pains

with the meditation, and made our colloquy and resolution.

2. We try to treasure up some thought which shall help us through the day. The saints call this a spiritual bouquet.

For a meditation of half-an-hour the reflection should not take less than five minutes in addition to the half hour.

The chief object of meditation is to learn to know our Lord, His Blessed Mother, and His Saints better, and to pray with our own hearts and in our own words, instead of using the thoughts and prayers of others, as we do in vocal prayer. Hence meditation is called *mental* prayer, to distinguish it from vocal prayer.



SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR JULY.

JULY 1st.

Our Lord's going to Tiberias.

I.

“And the Pharisees going out immediately, made a consultation with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. But Jesus retired with His disciples to the sea.”

Admire the patience and humility of Jesus. He leaves the Pharisees without punishing them. We are often allowed to leave those to whom we can do no good, but who are only more irritated by our presence.

Show great charity towards those who seek to injure you.

II.

“And a great multitude followed Him.”

Oh, how well did they feel He was their Saviour. The teachers of the Old Law were hard and cruel, but He healed them.

Does your soul need healing? Seek after Jesus by earnest prayer, and often approach His Sacred Body in Holy Communion.

III.

“For He healed many, so that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had evils.”

Beg of Him to cure you of impatience, touchiness, vanity, and love of self-justification.

In Holy Communion we ought not to come near Jesus in vain. Remain at His feet and say, Thou art my God, and I am nothing.

JULY 2nd.

Choice of the Twelve Apostles.

I.

“And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray.”

How different are human and divine thoughts. The Jews sought to destroy Jesus, and He was choosing His Apostles to perpetuate His work.

He withdrew from all around for this important action. In retreat Jesus meditated on your vocation, your great and holy destiny.

II.

“He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.”

He did this to teach us how slowly and earnestly we should pray and act about important matters. And His vigil has sanctified the hours of the night.

III.

“And when day was come, He called unto Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them (whom also He named Apostles).”

Our Lord had many disciples, but only twelve were chosen to the Apostolate.

“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you,” He said.

To how many millions of souls has not Jesus preferred you? How have you repaid Him, and dealt with His grace?

JULY 3rd.

The Beatitudes.

I.

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and when He had sat down His disciples came unto Him.”

This crowd was drawn thither by His grace.

Has He not called you, by secret inspirations, by His ministers, or by events in your life? How often the Gospel says, "*They sought to touch Jesus.*"

His divine Heart longs for our communions; let us therefore make them with the same faith and confidence of these poor people.

II.

"And He, lifting up His eyes on His disciples, said, Blessed are ye poor."

How many blessings poverty brings. From how many cares does it deliver.

What happiness is it to be poor like Jesus Christ!

Despise the things of earth as dust under your feet.

"Have nothing, desire nothing that is not necessary," says St. Bernard. And the more you love Jesus in His poverty, the more will you strip yourself of unnecessary things.

III.

"Blessed are the meek."

A poor person ought to be meek, that

he may bear the contempt that poverty brings.

Meekness makes us silent when the heart is wounded, and self-love is hurt. It keeps down nature. "The meek shall inherit the earth."

How meekly does our Divine Lord bear with your faults. How sweetly does He welcome you back to the banquet of His love.

JULY 4th.

The Beatitudes.—*Continued.*

I.

"Blessed are those that mourn."

When a soul despises the things of earth, she mourns over her exile and her faults.

And the tears that earth's troubles bring are mercifully looked on by God.

But alas! how many useless tears are shed from self-love and self-will. Tears united to the Precious Blood can win souls for God.

II.

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.”

Justice is faithful fulfilment of duty, and on it your soul should be fed.

Be as a beggar before your Lord imploring this gift.

Ask for strength to carry your cross. Those who are generous in sacrifice shall taste the manna hidden from the world.

III.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

This will make us like Jesus, so compassionate, so indulgent.

Render service to those who have given you pain.

Try to attain simple charity, free from all self-seeking and grudges.

“Mercy is better than sacrifice.” Do not fear to carry your patience too far.

You cannot be more indulgent to

others than Jesus Christ has been to you.

The best offering to our Lord in Holy Communion will be the tender forgiveness of the faults of others.

JULY 5th.

The Beatitudes.—*Continued.*

I.

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”

The clean of heart are the image of God; they shall behold Him in beatific vision.

Endeavour, by continual watchfulness over self, to imitate the purity of the Heart of Jesus.

Our imagination, mind, and memory often prevent us from seeing Jesus Christ.

Love prayer, solitude, and mortification, and then Jesus shall dwell in your heart.

II.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Peace is the companion of purity, and follows the pardon of our sins.

We can possess it by bending our will to that of God, and being contented with all He sends.

Close your lips to discussion, your heart to bitterness and resentment, your imagination to useless fancies, and you will have peace. Our Lord is peace. He bought this gift for us by His sufferings, and gives it to us with His love.

III.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

We must bear trials from others, and above all, the war with our own passions, which make us suffer for justice sake, and share the humiliations of Jesus Christ.

All your sufferings have first passed

through the Heart of Jesus. What matter if He places His cross on your shoulders, when He has placed His Eucharist in your heart? Thank our Lord for allowing you to find in the corruption of your own heart a means of sharing in His cross and merits.

JULY 6th.

Our Lord's Counsels.

I.

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works.”

You are bound by good example to give glory to God.

Watch especially over your speech. Let your words be those of wisdom, and your actions such that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Simplicity, modesty, love of God and your neighbour, ought to be the light by which you shall make others love Jesus Christ in you.

II.

"Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen of them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven."

The more you are brought forward, the deeper should be your humility. Seek not to do much, but to do things well.

Nothing is little in God's service; each action deserves earnest attention.

III.

"Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Our Lord bids us study God Himself, and not to be content with commonplace goodness.

Our Lady, the only perfect creature, acquired that perfection by fidelity in common things. In Holy Communion you receive the Uncreated Perfection, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ask, then, grace to become perfect.

JULY 7th.

Our Lord's Counsels.—*Continued.*

I.

“Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Intention is the soul of each action.

Actions, great or little, are nothing before God, who looks only at the intention, and who reads it in the depths of our hearts.

II.

Our Lord desires that we be just before God and men.

Every one of your actions ought to show the entire submission of heart, mind, and will to God.

Everything that happens is a visible manifestation of His rights over us.

We shall be just to others if we value each soul, as our Lord has done, more than our own life.

III.

Jesus Christ is our Justice in the Eucharist; He annihilates Himself in our name before His Father, and when in communion we are united to Jesus Christ thus annihilated, we give God the due homage of creatures.

Our Lord immolates Himself on the altar in our place, and completes His immolation in us by communion, and our life should continue that immolation. And by Jesus Christ our Eucharist we can give back to God all that He gives to us.

Thus by Jesus Christ living in us we obtain the right to possess heaven. Ask grace to understand this.

JULY 8th.

Our Lord's Counsels.—*Continued.*

I.

“But I say to you, not to resent evil. If a man strike you on the one cheek, turn to him also the other.”

Have you ever suffered from others anything approaching to what our Lord suffered for you?

If people can easily wound you, then you cannot really despise the world.

Humble yourself, because your conduct is so unlike the Gospel teaching.

II.

“Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.”

Charity is not human attraction; it is disinterested love.

Jesus, who has washed away in His Blood the injuries we gave Him, has the right to oblige us to forget a thousand wounds of our self-love.

We can never really have enemies, because God can bring good out of everything that happens.

Calumny can only disturb immortalized souls.

III.

"If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother."

We have nothing in us that can attract our Lord; nay, rather, we were His enemies: yet He humbled and sacrificed Himself for us. How then shall we not love our brethren, the price of His adorable Blood, in whom He lives by Holy Communion?

Never let there be a shadow between you and any other soul by your own fault.

Ask pardon of any one you have hurt before communion, for if you do not you will never derive real fruit from those communions.

Coldness towards others will be a barrier between you and God.

JULY 9th.

On Charity.

I.

“Judge not, that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged.”

There is a Judge who will decide on our judgment of others.

Excuse the faults of others, remembering your own.

We cannot look into the secrets of the soul, and our rash judgments are a usurpation of God's rights.

Perhaps he whom you judge is innocent in God's eyes, and you, judging him, are condemned.

II.

“Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

Those who are severe in censuring others are generally very indulgent to themselves.

Are you not more quick-sighted about the faults of others than your own? "Charity thinketh no evil."

Be slow in judging. Weigh your words well, and consult our Lord before you use His sovereign right.

III.

"All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them."

Be, then, as careful of the reputation of others as you are of your own.

Oh, how our Lord loves the indulgent and compassionate soul!

He has promised not to judge them. Remember that He sees your ingratitude and unfaithfulness, and yet He comes to you.

The key that opens your heart to your neighbour will also open the Heart of Jesus to you.

JULY 10th.

On Charity.—*Continued.*

I.

“Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away.”

Charity implies sacrifice. Are you patient and gentle in obliging others?

Do you act towards those who ask a service of you as you would do to our Lord Himself?

II.

“Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.”

Conceal all the good you do, unless you are obliged by duty to let it appear.

Never let your thoughts rest on what you have done.

Be ever on your guard, lest self-love, that great stumbling-block of good works, should spoil yours.

Be always ready to say sincerely, “I. an unprofitable servant.”

III.

Charity should be universal. Our heavenly Father "maketh His sun to rise on the good and the bad."

Are you kind to all around you? "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?"

Worldly-minded people will do much for each other for courtesy's sake. Shall they surpass you in charity?

The love of Him you receive in communion should flow forth on your lips.

Ask this grace from His Heart.

JULY 11th.

On Detachment.

I.

"Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven."

Do not attach yourselves to anything, not even to trifles.

See if your treasures have been corrupted by the worm of tepidity, or the rust of vanity.

Self-love, like a robber, can steal away good works.

II.

“For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.”

Our treasure is that on which our hearts are most set.

On what is your heart fixed? By your fears, your desires, your dislikes, you can tell this.

If you rest on self or creatures, your treasure will be lost, and your heart remain empty.

Let Jesus Christ be your treasure, let your thoughts be taken up with Him.

III.

“The light of thy body is the eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome.”

Intention is the eye of the soul, and

as the eye can only see one object at a time, so the soul can only seek one thing.

If the eye of your soul be fixed on Jesus, the smallest action will be a fresh step towards Him.

Ask our Lord to let you behold the secret folds of your own heart, that you may see if you are acting by the light of His grace.

Look straight at this Heart, and detach your will from all that is not in Him and for Him.

JULY 12th.

Confidence in God.

I.

“Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on.”

Look on all that happens to you as useful for your spiritual progress, be it privation, trials, contradictions. Each

thing our Lord sends is the best for you that day.

Leave all your cares in the Heart of Jesus; trust Him blindly.

II.

“Be not therefore solicitous for the morrow.”

Never give way to melancholy forebodings.

“Behold the birds of the air,”—namely, the saints,—they neither sow nor reap the things of earth. No earthly thing can keep back their souls in their flight towards heaven.

“Your Father knoweth you have need of all these things.”

Be quite submissive to the divine will. God will give all things to those who are hidden in the Heart of Jesus.

III.

“Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.”

Let your anxiety be to sanctify yourself.

How can you ever doubt God's care for you, when He gives Himself to you in Holy Communion ?

Whoever has Jesus has all things.

Does not experience show us the folly of anxious anticipations ?

And if our Lord will never fail you in this life, neither will He in the life to come ; but when He sees you with the cross you have bravely borne for Him, He will welcome you as His own,

JULY 13th.

On Prayer.

I.

“ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Our Lord wishes us to ask humbly for what we want ; but our most earnest prayer should be for divine grace.

Do you ask for it ? Do you seek after Jesus by faith, hope, charity, submission, and patience ?

Do you knock at His Heart by perseverance ?

II.

“When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.”

Be recollected before prayer ; close the door of your imagination and your senses.

Pour out your heart before God. Lay before Him your fears, your desires, your troubles.

Our Lord can read our hearts, but He wishes us to tell Him as a Friend that which He already knows as God. In prayer your strength should be.

III.

“When you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens.”

Dwell on the thoughts in prayer that

strike you most. Pray less with your lips than your heart.

Desire Jesus, and He will come. Open your soul to Him, and He will fill it. Give yourself up entirely to Him, and leave your heart and all your interests in His hand. Whatever is trusted to Him will be securely kept.

JULY 14th.

The Narrow Gate.

I.

“Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.”

The narrow way is that of labour and suffering. It is the path in which we must be humbled, that we may become great, and die that we may live.

Each step therein is a battle against nature and our own will. It is rough and steep, but there is no other way to eternal life.

II.

"And few there be that find it."
Our Lord seems to say these words sadly.

We forget that it requires a great effort to be a saint; but remember St. Paul's words, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."

We must struggle against self. Have patience and perseverance, and we shall go through that gate which is so low and narrow that none but little ones, that is, the humble, can pass it.

III.

"Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father."

Prayer without works is barren, nor will any works not according to the will of God be accepted by Him.

Always consult that adorable will, and give your preference to the employments that are uninteresting and painful. Follow Him who did on earth His Father's will, and offer Him in

your communions the daily duties that you like the least.

JULY 15th.

Cure of the Leper.

I.

“And behold a leper came and adored Him.”

Each sin leaves a stain on the soul.

Are there not many spiritual lepers on earth horrible in the eyes of angels?

Remembering all your sins, fall at the feet of Jesus with the humble faith of this poor leper.

He alone can purify us. Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.

II.

“And Jesus having compassion on him.”

Have you not often felt, after fervent prayer and humble confession, that His mercy has fallen on your soul?

The leper was prostrate at His feet, and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." Jesus touched him with His divine hands, and said, "I will, be thou made clean."

And by those hands, extended and nailed to the cross, He has delivered you from the leprosy of sin.

III.

In communion Jesus touches us with His adorable Flesh, and makes us pure.

How is it that, fed on this heavenly food, you are still so imperfect? "*Go, show thyself to the priest,*" said our Lord to the leper, "and offer the gift which Moses commanded."

Hide not from your confessor the wounds of your soul.

Offer the best of all gifts to God, even the Lamb without spot.

With Jesus nothing can fail us in time or eternity.

JULY 16th.

The Centurion's Servant.

I.

"There came to Him a centurion, saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy. Say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

This was the true prayer of faith. Lay your wants, and those of others, before our Lord with humble confidence, and you will have great power over His Heart.

II.

"And Jesus saith to him, I will come and heal him."

With such a Master what have we to fear?

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

Immortal words that the Church has

made her own. He who is Master over all nature can transform your heart.

Learn then to know Jesus.

III.

"Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee."

Prayer depends on faith.

"And his servant was healed the same hour."

The Heart of Jesus is ever open.

"Amen, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel."

Shall others, with less graces than you have received, excel you in strong and generous faith?

Oh, do not let your heritage pass to another.

Ask the gift of holy fear from the Heart of your Master.

JULY 17th.

The Widow of Naim.

I.

“And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother.”

Can you look on coldly while sin snatches so many souls from Jesus, who loves them far more than a mother loves a child?

“And He came near.”

Our Lord is never far from us, for our sorrows are a perpetual appeal to Him.

He holds the souls so dear to us in His hands.

II.

“Being moved with mercy towards her, He said to her, Weep not.”

Who could say this but He, who alone has power to “wipe away all tears”?

Do not weep over those earthly sorrows that are the means of your eternal bliss.

Weep only for those spiritual deaths for which our Lord shed tears of blood.

III.

No one could console this widow but Jesus. His Heart in the tabernacle is full of pity.

If you would only in your meditation lay all your sorrows before Him, the clouds would disperse before the sun of His love.

He will be your light, your life, your strength, and with His help you can bear your burden bravely to the end.

JULY 18th.

The Widow of Naim.—*Continued.*

I.

“Jesus touched the bier.”

Under the old law, to touch a corpse or bier was defilement, but our Lord came to purify all things.

His sacred Flesh has indeed the power to raise to life, as well as to cure and save.

Beg of our Lord to cure you of your mistrust of His goodness, and to give you power to inspire others with love and trust in Him.

II.

“Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.”

It is only the Word Incarnate who can make the dead hear and obey.

Admire the power of our Lord's voice; pray that your heart may never be deaf to it.

When you hear it, imitate this dead man, who instantly gave signs of the life given back to him. What a consolation to his sorrowful mother were those first words!

III.

“And He gave him to his mother.”

Does not God show by this that your

prayers can decide the fate of many souls?

God has placed some in your hands. Fear to lose, by neglecting grace, those whom God's will has given you.

Cast all your care on our Lady, the true Mother of souls.

JULY 19th.

Our Lord's Invitation.

I.

"Come to Me all ye that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

From the Incarnation to the tabernacle the Heart of Jesus has felt for us.

He knows how heavy is the burden of our miseries, and He wants to aid us.

Tell out at His feet all the sad secrets of your soul, your mind, and your heart.

II.

"And you shall find rest to your
'."

Our Lord knows that in the spiritual life there are moments of weariness and suffering that seem to overwhelm us.

Nothing but union with the Heart of Jesus can console you. Hasten then to obey His call, and rest in Him alone.

III.

“Take up My yoke, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”

He does not impose the yoke; He wants you to take it of your own will.

Accept what He offers you,—His cross, His nails, His Heart, His Body and Blood,—and you will indeed find that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

Ask for a love of the cross, for, as the *Imitation* says, without sorrow none liveth in love.

JULY 20th.**The Disciples of St. John the Baptist.****I.**

“And John called two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus.”

St. John desired that his disciples should know our Lord.

He had no thought of self. Learn, then, to seek the good of others, even at the price of humiliation and suffering.

II.

“And in that same hour He cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits.”

True sanctity is known by its fruits.

Can those around you see, by your words and actions, your prayers and your labours, that you are a true follower of Jesus Christ?

III.

“He said to them, Go and relate to hn what you have heard and seen.”

Ask our Lord to deliver you from spiritual ignorance, a roving imagination, an irresolute will.

Seek the lowest offices, and avoid all exaggeration in your speech, in praising others, and even in your self-accusation. Strive to correct in yourself the faults of the tongue.

Let Jesus act and speak in you for His greater glory, and be docile to the action of His grace.

JULY 21st.

Our Lord praises St. John.

I.

“And when the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John. What went ye out in the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?”

This would mean an uncertain, capricious, inconstant soul, cast down by adversity, overcome by fear, acting from impulse.

We should have brave hearts in God's service, and rise above difficulties.

II.

"What went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft garments?"

Those who seek Jesus must despise the things of earth, be ready for a hard life and constant mortification.

Are you intrepid in the path of virtue?

"This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee."

Do you prepare the way of the Lord to others?

III.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."

It is not easy to pass from anger to meekness, from pride to humility, from self-indulgence to mortification, from idleness to industry; but be not cast down.

Give yourself entirely to God, and heaven is yours.

Can you refuse anything to Him who gives you His whole self in Holy Communion ?

Cast your future into the Heart of your good Lord.

JULY 22nd.

Conversion of St. Mary Magdalene.

I.

“And He entered into the house of the Pharisee, and sat down to meat, and behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment.”

Mary of Magdala had forgotten God, and given herself up to creatures ; her life was a universal scandal. But, according to tradition, she had been converted by our Lord's preaching, and she now came contrite to His feet.

She was so full of confusion for her

own sins, she was glad to bear shame and scorn.

Is this so with you ?

II.

“And standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.”

Behold her deep humility, her spirit of reparation. She desires to offer to God in sacrifice the gifts by which she has offended Him.

Do you act in this generous manner towards our Lord ?

III.

“And kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”

Oh, true model of contrition ! How she loves Him whom she has wounded by her sin.

No doubt our Lord's feet must often have been cut by the hard and stony roads He traversed, and of course travel-stained, and no one took notice of it but the loving Magdalen.

After communion do you ever wash the feet of Jesus with your tears, and anoint them with your fervent devotion?

JULY 23rd.

Conversion of St. Mary Magdalene.—

Continued.

I.

“And the Pharisee spoke within himself, This Man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner.”

What an instance of that secret contemptuous judgment of others, of which we are so often guilty. And by it we also learn the folly of disturbing ourselves about the judgments of others. Let us fear the judgments of God, and not those of men, which will perish with them.

Magdalene knew that Jesus could read her heart.

II.

“And turning to the woman, He said unto Simon, Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them.”

Magdalene had been silent under reproach, and our Lord took up her defence.

The humble and the penitent can always leave their cause to Him; He will justify them in His own good time.

III.

“Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she with ointment hath anointed My feet.”

Oh, loving Heart of Jesus! How He reckons up everything we do for Him! He forgets our sins; He does not forget one act, one look, one word of love for Him.

No one is so truly grateful as our

dearest Lord. Love Him, then, and you will have great power over His Divine Heart.

JULY 24th.

Conversion of St. Mary Magdalene.—

Continued.

I.

“Wherefore I say to thee, Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much; but to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less.”

Oh, most powerful and consoling words! Who, then, can doubt? who, then, can be discouraged?

No matter what our past life has been, how black our sins; we can find pardon at the feet of Jesus. All we have to do is to love Him above all created things.

II.

“And He said to her, Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

And these very same words He says

to you, and to every contrite soul, through the voice of His priest in the sacrament of penance.

“Who is this that forgiveth sins also?”

We can give the answer. It is Jesus Christ, the God whom we have offended, but also the Redeemer who took our sins upon Himself, and bore stripes that we might be healed.

III.

“Go in peace.”

Go, then, and follow Magdalene in that life of intense devotion which began for her on that day.

We often meet her again in the Gospel history, and we always find her in the same place, at the feet of Jesus.

Do you stay at those divine feet? Do not be afraid. Every suffering, every tear, every struggle, every sacrifice, however small, will be written down in the book of life, and you will find by experience how the Heart of Jesus can make up to you for the loss of creatures and all earthly things.

JULY 25th.**Plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath.****I.**

“At that time Jesus went through the corn on the Sabbath, and His disciples, being hungry, began to pluck the ears, and to eat.”

Behold the poverty of your Divine Master, and the love of His disciples for Him, even in the midst of utter privations.

How do you behave as regards the food set before you? Do you turn away or murmur when it is not to your liking, or when anything is wanting?

II.

“And the Pharisees said to Him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?”

Have I the right to find fault with and condemn others?

If I avoided this habit, how many idle

III.

“And He, having put them all out, taketh the father and the mother, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.”

When our Lord enters a soul, He desires to banish self-love and sin, that His power and love may reign there.

But oftentimes He finds the soul asleep, unmindful of His presence.

Let our Lord enter the house of your soul, bringing with Him faith, and grace, and charity. Drive away all distractions that can hinder you from enjoying union with Him.

JULY 27th.

Raising of the Ruler's Daughter.—

Continued.

I.

“But He, taking her by the hand, cried out, saying, Maid, arise.”

The coldest heart will regain warmth if it is touched by the hand of Jesus.

Listen to His voice. Rise up from your spiritual torpor, and beg of Him never to let anything render you inactive in His service.

II.

“And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately.”

Here is a model of a true conversion, of a fervent soul, walking straight towards heaven by acts of virtue.

“And He bid them give her to eat.”

And does He not give to you the Bread of Angels, to strengthen you in the journey of life?

III.

“And her parents were astonished, whom He charged to tell no man what was done.”

Our Lord is constantly teaching us to avoid the praise and glory of men.

Do you thus act? Are you *astonished* at the daily miracles He is working for you?

In spite of His warning the news of this resurrection went abroad.

Is your conduct a living witness of the graces produced in you by frequent communion?

JULY 28th.

The Two Blind Men.

I.

“And as Jesus passed from thence, there followed Him two blind men, crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, O Son of David.”

Is your spiritual vision as clear as that of these poor men? Do you think you see, while really you are “poor, and blind, and naked,” in our Lord’s sight?

If we want light we must follow Jesus. How many halts and pauses have you not made in that path?

II.

“Have mercy on us, O Son of David.”
How much time do you not spend in

words and thoughts and deeds that hinder you from asking help from our Lord ?

The blind men believed in Jesus Christ because they had heard Him speak.

Does He not speak to you from the tabernacle in Holy Communion, by the *lights* and inspirations of grace ? Do you obey His sacred voice ?

III.

“And when He was come to the house the blind men came to Him.”

Our Lord had seemed not to notice the blind men, but they persevered in their prayer.

Do you pray with patience, waiting on God, or do you get easily discouraged because your prayers are not heard at once ?

The blind men were not to be cured till they had entered the house ; and you must forsake the world, and dwell in the house of the Lord, if you wish to be cured and enlightened by the Heart of Jesus.

JULY 29th.

The Two Blind Men.—*Continued.*

I.

“And Jesus said to them, Do you believe I can do this unto you? They say to Him, Yea, Lord.”

Grace is given in measure according to our dispositions. If you do not prepare well to receive it, if you do not correspond with what you receive, you will not “grow in grace,” nor “go on from strength to strength,” as the fervent soul should do.

II.

“Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you.”

And does not Jesus often touch your eyes and your whole being in Holy Communion? Does not His Heart beat against yours?

If your faith were only a lively one, what light would you not receive in

those blessed moments. Alas! after so many Communion you remain blind and ignorant of so many spiritual things. You should deplore this bitterly.

III.

“And their eyes were opened.”

They saw then this perishable world. Their faith and their prayer were rewarded. We may firmly believe that later on they saw better things. “They, going out, spread about His fame.” No doubt they became His faithful disciples.

Ask, then, for a grace to be bestowed on you, as it was on them, a grace that will render you indeed faithful to the end. Say to your Divine Lord, Open my eyes, that I may see what I can *do* by Thy grace, what I *owe* to Thy love, what I *lose* by my indifference.

JULY 30th.**The Mission of the Apostles.****I.**

“And He called the Twelve, and began to send them two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.”

The Apostles were poor and ignorant men, and all they did was in their Master's name, and by His strength.

Never be puffed up with any gift you receive, but rather live in fear lest you may not give by it all the glory due to God.

“And going, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you.” Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. Freely have ye received, freely give.”

And so they went out on their mission of charity to spread about the tenderness of the Divine Heart.

II.

“Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses.”

Those who work for God must have the true spirit of poverty. Love of gain, or of earthly comforts, cannot dwell with the true apostle.

See if you love poverty, if you are really following Jesus, who was poor from His birth to His death.

“Salute no man by the way.”

Do not lose time in idle curiosity or dissipation. Life is too short and too precious to waste a moment.

III.

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have.”

Our Lord teaches us here to be indifferent about food. If we occupy our minds about our own comforts, and indulge our own whims and fancies, how can we be united to Him?

“Remain in the same house.” Never be ungrateful to those who show you

kindness. Take great care not to wound the feelings of others, especially if they are poor and simple.

Our Lord's Heart is so exquisitely tender, and those who imitate it will show tender consideration to the feelings of others.

JULY 31st.

Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

I.

"Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."

The apostolate of souls has been carried on age after age by the faithful servants of the Lord.

One of these was Ignatius of Loyola, who, with little learning, for he was but a soldier, without any temporal means, for he had forsaken all things, went forth to raise in a new and special manner the standard of Jesus in the midst of His enemies.

Have I listened to his burning words

in vain? Have I refused to follow that standard?

II.

“Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.”

These words were wonderfully illustrated by this great saint. He trained his followers, the Company of Jesus, to become wise and prudent, that they might gain souls; and humble and gentle as little children, that they might perfect their own lives, and become in all things like Him they preached.

Such was the saint himself, wise and prudent beyond measure, but rooted in humility and contempt of the world. Are you walking in that path?

III.

“And you shall be brought before governors and before kings, for My sake.”

And this was the glorious heritage St. Ignatius won for his “Company.”

Never during its whole history has persecution ceased.

Our Lord did not fear the hatred of men, neither did this great saint, who drank in so deeply the lessons of his Divine Master. And thus his order, the Company of Jesus, has remained faithful to its constitutions, its traditions, its spirit, because it is ever being purified by the fire of persecution.

Do not, then, be cowardly in God's service. Ask, by the intercession of St. Ignatius, for an intrepid heart and persevering courage to follow Jesus, despising the world.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

AUGUST.

Let us try to deliver others from spiritual darkness.

People are often bound, as by chains, by the fear of what others will say of them, and by our courage and faith we can set them free.

Human respect and pride keep souls silent when they ought to speak.

Do they act thus on you ?

III.

“ And the multitudes wondered, saying, Never was the like seen in Israel.”

And the grace that flows from Jesus silent in the tabernacle is ever working wonderful miracles.

Souls come before Him, and He casts out the dumb devil, and then they pour out themselves before Him. They make humble confessions and fervent prayers, and they speak words of exceeding gratitude to their Deliverer.

Ask, then, many graces from your good Lord.

AUGUST 2nd.**The Pool of Bethsaida.****I.**

“Now there is at Jerusalem a pond called Probatika, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water.”

Here is a true picture of spiritual diseases.

Those who languish on in cold indifference to God, or who are blind to heavenly things, or halting in their road to heaven, or bound by the paralysis of sin.

Are you among these classes? Do you desire to be cured?

II.

“And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved.”

Learn from the humble obedience of

this angel to be ready to live in obscure spots, and fulfil mean employments.

There is nothing really mean in God's eyes, and the most lowly task is more than we deserve.

III.

“And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.”

No one knew when the angel would come.

God wishes us to wait upon His will, and know that His time for answering prayer is best.

Souls of good will always are the foremost in God's service.

Do you eagerly wait for the coming of Jesus Christ into your heart in Holy Communion? Do you ask Him to cure your sick soul by His grace, and make you strong in His service?

AUGUST 3rd.

The Pool of Bethsaida.—Continued.

I.

“And there was a certain man there that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity.”

Can you count up the number of your faults and sins?

“Him when Jesus had seen lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, He saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole?”

See how our Lord watches us, and anticipates our needs, yet how He desires to hear us cry unto Him.

Have you bathed your soul in the sacrament of penance, offered to you by Him who desires to make you whole?

II.

“The infirm man answered Him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond; for whilst

I am coming another goeth down before me."

Our Lord has cured your soul of many infirmities, and has nourished you with His Flesh and Blood.

Do you show forth His praises and proclaim His goodness?

Live, then, for Jesus, as you live by Him, and never again wound His Heart by sin.

If we lean on creatures we shall have perpetual disappointment, but if we trust in Jesus He will never fail us. Those who lean on Him can never say, "I have no one to help me," for of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things. Say to Him, then, with all your heart, "My God and my All."

III.

"Jesus saith to him, Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

If we would get rid of tepidity we must make an effort, and *arise*; we must put away sin, *take up thy bed*; and we must not go back after our rising up, but *walk* in the path of life.

Follow your Master, and He will lead you on. Watch, pray, mortify yourself, and step by step you shall reach heaven.

AUGUST 4th.

The Pool of Bethsaida,—*Continued.*

I.

“The Jews therefore said to him that was healed: It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. He answered them; He that made me whole He said to me, Take up thy bed and walk.”

Here is an instance of prompt courageous obedience, which makes us indifferent to criticism, and brave before human respect.

Have a horror of jealousy and envy, and a spirit of captious censure and curious investigation of the conduct of others.

II.

“Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple.”

He used his new-found strength to visit the house of God, and thank Him, and there he found Jesus. So shall we find Him if we seek His face, and above all, if we are grateful for His favours.

Do you cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving? Do you number up the mercies and graces you have received?

Let your heart be a temple wherein you shall meet the Lord.

III.

“Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.”

It is terrible to fall back into sin after a sincere conversion. We cannot tell whether fresh grace will be given to us to rise up again.

“The man went his way, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.”

Do you give glory to God?

AUGUST 5th.

Our Lord's Discourse.

I.

"Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner."

The Holy Trinity cannot be divided. Behold, then, how God in Three Persons occupieth Himself with your salvation and your happiness. Thank Him for that infinite love. Imitate that perfect submission of Jesus in His human nature to His Father by your submission to His holy will.

II.

"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son."

Our Lord came not into this world to judge us, but to save. In the next world He will be our judge, and to those who

seek nothing but the glory of God the thought of that judgment ought not to be fearful.

“As I hear so I judge, and My judgment is just.”

Try, then, to judge of crosses and humiliations as our Lord one day will do; and so live that, like St. Teresa, you may say, when you are dying, “I die in peace; I go to be judged by Him whom I love.”

III.

“Amen, amen, I say to you, he that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life.”

Our whole life here is but a preparation for eternity. To believe in Jesus Christ is to have *already* eternal life. We should strengthen this life within us, by frequent communion and prayer.

AUGUST 6th.

The Transfiguration.

I.

“Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John.”

From all eternity Jesus has chosen us out of many other people. “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” It is Jesus, then, who has loved and called you. Are you following Him?

Whatever happens, be ready to say, “My lot is in Thy hands.”

II.

“And bringing them up to a high mountain.”

If we will be perfect, we must leave the world and detest its spirit. We must renounce ourselves and love the cross. In silence and recollection we shall hear the inspirations of God.

III.

“And He was transfigured before them.”

Suffering is the key to eternal life. On earth we meet with many sorrows, but is not Holy Communion a foretaste of heaven? Have courage, then, to say with St. Teresa, “Let me suffer or die: suffer, that I may merit Thee, O my Jesus; or die, that I may possess Thee.”

AUGUST 7th.

The Transfiguration.—Continued.

I.

“And His face did shine as the sun; and His garments became exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.”

But how far more beautiful was His soul, His Divine Majesty. He gives us a glimpse of His glory, for He wants to make us happy upon earth before He gives us eternal bliss. Kiss, then, in

spirit, His glorious wounds, and thank Him for having suffered so much for you.

II.

“But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; and waking, they saw His glory.”

Tepidity is spiritual sleep, by which we lose grace and light. Be fervent, and light shall come.

“Peter saith, Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles; not knowing what he said.”

And when we attach ourselves to earth, and seek its consolations, we do not know what we are about.

Ask our Lord to give you light.

III.

“Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.”

He will teach you all truth. Listen to His secret inspirations, when He tells you to renounce *this* fault, to correct

that habit, to restrain your tongue, to mortify your senses.

“They saw no man but Jesus only with them.”

Happy will you be if on this earth you live only for Jesus and with Jesus. Ask for this grace.

AUGUST 8th.

After the Transfiguration.

I.

“And as they came down from the mountain He charged them not to tell any man the things they had seen.”

We ought not to speak of the graces we have received except under obedience. Let us not desire esteem or reputation among men, and be on our guard lest vanity should spoil the little we do for God.

II.

“And they asked Him, sayi^g ., Why

then do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elias must come first?"

We should bring our doubts and difficulties with all humility to those charged with our direction, and submit to their decision; for God will never allow the obedient to be deceived.

Do you mistrust your own ideas? Are you prompt in giving them up, and thus conquering self-love?

III.

"But I say to you that Elias is already come; and they knew him not."

Our Lord meant St. John the Baptist. Do you try to know Jesus Christ by studying every detail of His life and sufferings? Can He say to you, after communion, that He came to you His own, and you knew Him not? Do you, on the contrary, both know and make Him known to others? Is your will united to His?

AUGUST 9th.

Cure of the Lunatic Child.

I.

“And coming to His disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes disputing with them.”

See the danger of dissipation. Be on your guard against useless and worldly conversation, discussions, and disputes.

“And presently all the people, seeing Jesus, was astonished and struck with fear.”

We may suppose that the rays of glory were still lingering on His divine features. What, then, will be the terror of those who shall see Him in His majesty, and yet not belong to Him?

“And running to Him, saluted Him.”

Does human respect ever prevent you from giving God due reverence and homage?

II.

“Master, I beseech Thee look upon my son, because he is my only one.

“And lo, a spirit seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him, so that he foameth, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him.”

Here is a picture of a soul under the power of the devil, of one who yields to a besetting sin.

What efforts do you make to overcome your principal faults? Without our Lord you can do nothing.

“I desired Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.”

But with Jesus you can resist the devil and overcome self.

III.

“Oh, incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?”

It is a terrible thing to be reproached by our Lord; yet how often do we force Him to reproach us, by pointing out to us how this feeling indulged, or that

fault uncorrected, has wounded His Divine Heart.

Fear lest your unfaithfulness should drive Him from you. His patience is indeed divine, but our life is short and will soon pass away.

“Bring him unto Me.”

Yes, bring your own soul to Jesus, and all the souls of those you love, for without His grace you can do nothing.

AUGUST 10th.

The Cure of the Lunatic Child.—

Continued.

I.

“If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Whatever may be our inward sufferings, or the darkness of our temptations, we can always make an act of faith.

“And immediately the father of the boy, crying out with tears, said, I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief.”

Here is a model of a firm and humble prayer. Do you weep over your spiritual miseries, the weakness of your faith; or is it not rather over the wounds of your self-love?

II.

“He threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: I command thee, go out of him.”

How can we fear the devil when he is but the slave of our Lord; when with one word and one look He can put him to flight?

“And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead.”

The action of the devil on our souls is to torment them, and destroy their life; but the touch of Jesus gives new strength, new power, new hope.

Throw yourself therefore at His divine feet; there the devil cannot harm you.

III.

“His disciples secretly asked Him, Why could not we cast him out? Jesus

said to them, Because of your unbelief; for, amen, I say to you, If you had faith nothing should be impossible to you."

I can, then, change pride into humility; obstinacy into docility; impatience into meekness; idleness into a laborious life; weakness into a determined will.

Nothing is impossible to a living faith.

"This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting."

We must have the spirit of penance if we would root out our faults. But is not this easy to those who desire to gain heaven?

AUGUST 11th.

Forgiveness of Injuries.

I.

"If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee thou shalt gain thy brother."

We cannot be unmindful of the salva-

tion of others. We might easily perish with those that perish by our fault. Our souls might have to pay for theirs.

Do you try to gain others by tender, self-forgetting charity?

II.

“Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him; till seven times?”

St. Peter imagined that he had named the utmost limit, that our Lord had only to assent.

Never try to make your superiors obey you by forcing your opinion upon them. Never accuse any one unjustly, for his guardian angel will accuse you before God. Do not seek advice with your mind made up already.

III.

“Jesus saith to him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.”

We are to forgive as we are forgiven; that is, continually. How often are the

absolving words said over you ! With what marvellous patience does our Lord bear with you !

Open your heart to Jesus. Let Him cast out its gall and bitterness for others, and fill it with His sweetness and His mercy, that you may become His living image.

AUGUST 12th.

On Eternal Salvation.

I.

“ If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Our Lord respects our liberty. If any man *will*. See what glory, then, you can give to God by striving after perfection. To do so you must renounce self.

Are you faithful in little sacrifices ? Worldlings will make great ones to obtain the objects of their ambition. Have you no ambition to follow your Master ?

He will never disappoint you. Whosoever *will* go to Him shall find Him.

II.

“But he that shall save his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

We must look upon self as an enemy to be hated and despised.

Is there anything, great or small, that you would hesitate to sacrifice to the glory of God?

III.

“For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?”

The only important thing on earth is to save our soul.

Death must come, and we must leave all things and all creatures.

Nothing will follow us into eternity save our sins and our merits.

What exchange shall a man give for his soul? It is beyond all price, for it has cost the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Then give up all, that you may possess all.

In exchange for your miserable soul, and all its sins, present to God Jesus Christ your ransom, to whom your heart is given.

AUGUST 13th.

Our Lord's Relatives.

I.

“And one said unto Him: Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking Thee.”

The word brethren was used by the Jews to describe cousins or kinsfolk.

See the humility of our Lady, patiently waiting till she could see our Lord. Her sweet meekness induced some one to interrupt our Lord's sermon.

Are you eager in helping others?
Are you patient in waiting?

II.

“And stretching forth His hand to-

wards His disciples, He said: Behold My mother and My brethren."

By this solemn lesson we learn that the nearest and dearest ties must not come between us and our Lord. It teaches us also the love of souls. How ready we must be, if such be our vocation, to leave all things that we may gain souls to Christ.

III.

"For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is My brother, and My sister, and My mother."

Great indeed is the love of Christ Jesus for the souls for whom He died. To teach them the way of salvation He denies Himself the joy of dwelling with His blessed Mother.

Alas! how often do we allow even trifles to interrupt our union with Him.

How hard we find it to do the will of God, to give up our own desires and our own wishes.

Ask for the grace of conformity to the will of God.

AUGUST 14th.**The Blessedness of Christ's Mother.****I.**

"Blessed is the womb that bore Thee,
and the paps which Thou hast sucked."

A woman, believed to be Marcella,
the servant of Martha, uttered these
words. Admire her faith and courage.

From age to age the Church re-echoes
her voice. Yes, Mary is blessed because
she was immaculate, because she was
ever a virgin, because her only Child
was God Incarnate.

Congratulate her on these gifts,

II.

"But He said: Yea, rather, blessed
are they who hear the word of God and
keep it."

Our dear Lord owned that His sweet
Mother was blessed in giving Him birth,
but He declares that her perfect con-
formity to the divine will made her still
more blessed, and in that blessedness

we all may share, and thus become exceedingly dear to the Divine Heart.

Are you generous in self-conquest ?
Do you study how to do His will ?

III.

“Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.”

The words of Jesus Christ should be the food of our souls, the guiding star of our lives. They will teach us how to use all its events, troubles, weariness, humiliations, and to despise the world.

If you suffer they will show you Jesus crucified, your model; and after the cross, heaven.

Hear, then, His words and keep them.

AUGUST 15th.

The Assumption of our Lady.

I.

“O death, where is thy victory ? O death, where is thy sting ?”

The death of Mary was the hour of

her triumph and her joy. No sickness caused it; it was love alone that broke the links between her immaculate soul and her virginal body.

She had received the last sigh of Jesus, and Jesus now came to receive her parting breath. Kneel, then, in spirit by your Mother's side to receive her last blessing on the earth.

II.

"My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works."

See your Mother as she enters heaven, surrounded by angels. Now she is to receive the reward of her immaculate and spotless virginity, of her perfect obedience, of her deep humility, and of her crucified heart.

Count up, if you can, the jewels of her crown as queen of heaven and earth, and long for the hour when you shall see her in her glory.

III.

"And they shall reign for ever and ever."

In the joy of heaven our Mother and our Lady does not forget us. Her pure prayer is ever rising up for us. She asks that we too may die in the arms of Jesus.

Let us, then, aided by her prayers, destroy and kill self-love in us, so that we may be, in life and in death, the children of Mary, so that we may live in close union with the Heart of Jesus, and be His for ever and ever.

AUGUST 16th.

Imitation of our Lady.

I.

“Blessed is the man that heareth me.”

Loving children praise their mothers; and we, who know what Mary is, should strive to spread devotion to her upon earth. By this means you will lead souls to Jesus. Have we not received Him from her hands?

Did He not come forth to save us from her virginal body? Give yourself,

and lead others to do the same, through Mary to Jesus.

II.

“I was with Him.”

Our Lady wants us to take her place, as it were, before the tabernacle, to pray and watch there as she did when on earth, to find it our sweetest place of rest, to keep our hearts there if we cannot be there in body.

It is a pious custom to choose some deserted tabernacle, and watch beside it in spirit, offering all we do to Him who is there alone and neglected.

III.

“Delighted every day.”

Our Lady wants us, as it were, to continue her communions, to give Him in His sweet sacrament the homage she used to give Him when she dwelt on earth.

Go, then, to the altar, and offer the burning desire of Mary for communion, and for your thanksgiving the love of her immaculate heart.

AUGUST 17th.

Payment of the Tribute.

I.

"They that received the didrachma came to Peter, and said to him: Doth not your Master pay the didrachma?"

Our Lord, as Son of David, was exempt from tribute.

"He said to Peter: The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute, of their own children, or of strangers? And he said: Strangers. Jesus said to him: Then are the children free."

How great was the humility and self-abnegation of the Divine Word.

Are you ready to give up any privilege you may possess in order to do good to others?

II.

"But that we may not scandalize them, go thou to the sea, and cast in a hook, and that fish which shall first

come up, take; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a stater."

How deep was the poverty of Jesus. He has to work a miracle to obtain the tribute money. Our dear Lord was indeed the poorest of men; and shall His followers love comfort and ease, and shrink from poverty with its contempt and privations?

III.

"Give it to them for Me and thee."

How blind was the obedience of St. Peter!

If we obeyed in faith, miracles would be wrought for us also. How completely our dear Lord makes Himself one with us,—“Me and thee.”

He has given to each of us His own self. He shares with us His Body, His Blood, His merits. He has given us the means wherewith to pay the debt we owe to divine justice, and He wants to share with us the glory of heaven.

Does not your heart overflow with gratitude to your Divine Master?

AUGUST 18th.

On Giving Scandal.

I.

“Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.”

These words of our Lord are terrible.

Carefully should we guard our conduct; that we may not give scandal.

To see those who are supposed to be devoted to God's service indulge worldly ideas, and seek after worldly pleasures, gives scandal.

II.

“If thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.”

If there is anything dear to you that

hinders your union with God, give it up, whether it be a person or a thing.

Do not caress your own defects; they are the world to you, that world you have renounced.

Fly from praise; God only is deserving of it.

III.

“See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.”

The principal means of giving scandal is by speech. How many souls have been ruined by hearing foolish, inconsiderate, uncharitable, and malicious words!

How can the tongues on which so often rest the Body and Blood of Christ utter such words?

Do you not fear the testimony that the angel guardians of others will render to God of the harm your conversation has done?

Ought you not rather to help the holy angels to save souls? From how many sins does the love of holy silence preserve us.

Pray that you may be an angel of charity to those around you.

AUGUST 19th.

The Tower of Siloe.

I.

"I say to you: Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

Our Lord spoke these words on hearing of the massacre of Galileans in the temple.

What would have been your fate if God had sent you a sudden death?

Yet we must all be ready for such an ending.

No one is secure of life for one moment.

We ought to be ever prepared for our last hour.

II.

“Or those eighteen on whom the tower fell in Siloe, and slew them: think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem?”

It was an opinion among the Jews that sudden death was a punishment for sin.

Our Lord teaches us their error.

We must not search into God's judgments, but adore them as holy and just.

God's ways are mysterious. By the same event He punishes the sinner and purifies the just.

III.

“No, I say to you: but except you do penance you shall all likewise perish.”

Is penance part of your life? Have you a true spirit of mortification?

We often fear an unprepared death. Do we fear as much an unprepared communion?

Do you follow our Lord in His life of labour and penance for our sins?

AUGUST 20th.

On Hell.

I.

“To be cast into hell fire.”

Awful are the punishments reserved by the God of infinite justice for the wicked.

A fire burning with a fury we cannot on earth comprehend.

Look at the place amidst those flames where you deserve to be.

Have you ever given God the gratitude you ought for having up to this hour saved you from it?

Let your soul be on fire with love of your good God.

II.

“Where their worm dieth not.”

Ah, who can picture the agony of their remorse, the tortures of memory, bringing before them their sins, their wilfulness, their graces abused?

How vain and wretched now appear

the things which they preferred to God. Past, present, and future, each has its special torture. The worm of rage and despair devours them. Then let us watch, then let us pray.

III.

“And the fire is not extinguished.”

Eternal separation from God, never to see Him, but to hate Him for ever.

To know God as only He will be known in eternity, and not to be able to love Him.

What would you feel if you were told you would have to live long years without communion? Yet what a faint shadow would that anguish be compared to that of the lost souls?

Give up your whole heart and soul to the love of Jesus Christ.

AUGUST 21st.**The Account.****I.**

“The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take account of his servants.”

Our Lord requires us to give an account of our debts to Him in the sacrament of penance.

“One was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents.”

Is not this your picture? Do you not owe Him your body, your soul, your intellect, and innumerable graces, and have you used them all in His service?

II.

“And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had.”

Has not God a perfect right to banish you from His presence, and take away all the graces He has given you?

“But that servant, falling down, be-

sought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

Here is your only hope. Say often, "Patience of the Heart of Jesus, forsake me not."

III.

"And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt."

Oh, wonderful tenderness and compassion of the Heart of Jesus. Day by day, year by year, He goes on forgiving us our debts.

He has become our surety with divine justice, blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us.

Fall down and adore His goodness.

AUGUST 22nd.

The Harsh Creditor.

I.

"But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and

laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying, Pay what thou owest,”

What a difference there is between the enormous sum of our offences against God, and the trifling injustices we receive from others.

Yet have you not often eagerly demanded reparation of the wrongs done to you, while you have never thought of offering any to the Heart of Jesus?

II.

“And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not,”

Do we not kneel in the confessional, and receive pardon, and then come forth to be hard in our judgments, and severe in our words and actions with others?

Pray that you may learn that charity is patient, is kind.

III.

“And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers, until he should pay all the debt.”

Want of forgiveness always displeases our Lord greatly.

It springs from pride, and it shows an utter want of gratitude to God.

Hold, then, this sin in horror. Never let resentment linger in your heart, and pray to have a spirit of free and full forgiveness.

AUGUST 23rd.

The Barren Fig-Tree.

I.

"A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none."

Your soul is the tree that should bring forth fruit to salvation. Is it so, or are you barren in good works, in acts of virtue?

Where are the souls that you have gained to God?

Have you only leaves, that is, piety without self-sacrifice?

II.

“And he said to the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore. Why cumbereth it the ground?”

What have you done hitherto with the years of your life?

Has our Lord found in your soul patience, humility, faith, and charity?

Are you wasting those graces that another in your place would use well?

III.

“But he answering, said to him, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it, and if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

The angels and saints make intercession for us,

Do you take correction from superiors with gratitude?

“Nothing is so precious as self-know-

ledge," says St. Austin. Humility is the rich soil in which the soul flourishes, and then our Lord will cause it to bring forth flowers and fruit.

Implore our Lord that you may never be cut down and banished from Him, •

AUGUST 24th,

The Disciples' Dispute.

I.

"And when they were in the house, He asked them: What did you treat of in the way? But they held their peace."

They did not like to tell out their vanity even before Him who could read their secret thoughts.

Are not you as foolish as they? Are you really frank and open even with our Lord Himself?

Do you not try to keep up self-deceit even before His eyes?

II.

"For in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest."

Are you not eager for notice and praise, and to have the first place?

Do you like to be put in the background, forgotten, despised, unnoticed?

Say often to our Lord, "From the fear of being overlooked deliver me, Jesus."

III.

"And sitting down, He called the twelve, and saith to them: If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all."

How great was the patience of our dearest Lord with His disciples.

Their faults did not weary nor disgust Him. He sat down and called them round Him to teach them.

Do you, then, humbly listen to the teaching of those who speak in His name, and ask our Lord to grant you the grace of docility.

•

AUGUST 25th.

The Little Child in the midst of them.

I.

“And taking a child, He set him in the midst of them, whom, when He had embraced, He saith to them, Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in My name receiveth Me.”

Happy child to be caressed by Jesus Christ. What a proof it was of how He loves the simple and docile.

If you are proud, vain, or ambitious, you will never draw near His Sacred Heart.

II.

“Amen, I say to you, Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Humility is the mark of sanctity.

How hard it is for our proud hearts
to attain it.

How hard to love to be hidden and unknown, ignored and counted as nothing.

Only God's grace can make it easy or even possible.

III.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."

Humility can only be attained through humiliation; and this road, after all, is not so rough and hard as it seems, for Jesus has trodden it before us, and the fragrance lingers in the traces of His footsteps.

There is wonderful peace hidden in humiliation; a marvellous sense of drawing near to Him "meek and humble of Heart."

Falling, then, at His feet, implore the grace of spiritual transformation, which shall make you a little child in Christ.

AUGUST 26th.

Jesus predicts His Passion.

I.

“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients, and by the high priests and the Scribes, and be killed.” And so He taught that after having been born in a stable, He would die a disgraceful death.

Has not He who asks humility from you indeed shown you that He chose many humiliations, “suffered many things”? Nothing was too much for the love of Jesus.

When we look at Him, and meditate on His life, how little do our sufferings and trials, of which we complain, appear.

II.

“And Peter, taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying: Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee.”

Here is the spirit of the world; it

detests humiliations, confusion, adversity, and the cross. It despises poverty and abhors suffering.

Ask to be delivered from this spirit.

III.

“Who, having said to Peter: Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou dost not relish the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.”

Happy is the soul whom our Lord deigns thus to correct and punish, in place of leaving it to itself.

But learn the danger of opposing God's designs, for others as well as for ourselves.

Every event of our lives has its part in our sanctification.

Ask for grace to live by faith, and to take a wholly supernatural view of all that happens.

AUGUST 27th.**The Town that refused to receive
our Lord.****I.**

“And He sent messengers before His face, and going, they entered into a city of the Samaritans to prepare for Him.”

Are you one of the messengers that Jesus can choose to go before His face? Is your life such as to draw souls to Jesus?

It was said of St. Francis de Sales: “If he is so tender, so kind, so humble, what must his Master be?”

Is your example, and specially your manners and words, such as would attract souls to the spiritual life?

II.

“And they received Him not.”

Have you never shut your heart against our Lord, although it was open wide for creatures?

Have you not sometimes lost communion by your own fault, either by

indulging some imperfection, or for some human motive ?

III.

“Because His face was of one going to Jerusalem.”

Here is a terrible instance of the effects of prejudice and the spirit of discord.

From their dislike to the Jews the town of Enganim lost the marvellous grace of a visit from God Incarnate.

Do you not often miss grace, from foolish prejudices, and dislike of persons or places ? Have you not been deaf to messages from Him, if given by the lips of those who did not attract you ?

Ask for grace to seek Jesus in all things.

AUGUST 28th.

The Town that refused to receive our Lord.—Continued.

I.

“And when His disciples James and John had seen this, they said, Lord,

wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Here is the spirit of our fallen nature, resentment and vengeance.

The zeal that is angry is false zeal.

"God," says the prophet, is "strong and patient;" and the apostle tells us that "charity is not provoked to anger."

II.

"And turning, He rebuked them, saying, You know not of what spirit you are."

Our Lord is always severe with faults against charity.

Strive to attain the spirit of Jesus Christ. Be very merciful to others. You will gain for yourself the merit of patience, and you are far more likely to conquer evil doers by kindness than by harshness.

III.

"The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save. And they went into another town."

When we see Jesus, Lord of heaven

and earth, driven away by an ungrateful city, calmly going to another town, can we be impatient under injury?

Can we find it hard to submit to those who are harsh and unreasonable?

Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like unto Thine.

AUGUST 29th.

The Ten Lepers.

I.

“And as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off.”

Leprosy was a mortal disease. The leper knew his days were numbered.

He was an outcast from his fellow-men, nor might he enter the temple.

What a true type of mortal sin, a disease which, without God, is incurable, and will lead to eternal death, and will banish the soul for ever from the company of saints and angels, and

from that city wherein the Lord God Almighty is the temple.

II.

“And they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

The sinner could not approach our Lord if it were not for His tender loving-kindness.

Call, then, on your Master and your Saviour. Ask Him to cure you of spiritual darkness, indocility of heart, and love of the world.

Lay open to Him all the wounds of your poor soul with great confidence.

III.

“Whom when He saw.”

There are many on whom men never bestow a thought, they pass them by; but the eye of Jesus is ever on them.

“Go, show yourselves to the priests. It came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean.”

Have you as much reverence as you ought for the sacrament of penance ?

Do you feel that deep gratitude you ought to our Lord for having left His priesthood in the world, to carry on the work of cleansing souls from sin by the virtue of His Precious Blood ?

Ask our Lord to enable you to do this in future.

AUGUST 30th.

The Ten Lepers.—*Continued.*

I.

“And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God.”

Out of ten only one returned. Perhaps there is nothing so astonishing in the conduct of Christians as their want of gratitude.

We pray when we are in trouble. Are we equally fervent in returning thanks for favours obtained ? Do you not often take God's gifts as a matter of course ?

II.

"And Jesus answering, said, Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine?"

How sadly does our dear Lord seem to ask this question, as if their ingratitude had surprised even Him who knew so well the weakness of our mortal nature.

Has He cause to say this of you?

Are you fervent in your thanksgivings after Holy Communion?

III.

"And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks."

What an example to us of humble gratitude.

Our Lord has delivered us from the leprosy of original sin, and perhaps often from that of actual sin, and in spirit we should often be prostrate at His feet, giving Him thanks for all He has wrought in us, and then we shall hear His dear voice saying, "Arise, and go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole."

AUGUST 31st.

Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary.*

I.

“But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.”

What a wonderful picture this gives us of the thoughtfulness of our Blessed Lady.

If we wish to be like her we must put away all levity, inconsideration, and carelessness in God's service, for life is a solemn and earnest thing, and we must, with our dear Mother, ponder over the marvellous lessons that our Lord has taught us.

II.

“And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.”

How true, then, is it that by Mary we go to Jesus.

In her Immaculate Heart we find laid

* This Meditation can be transferred to the day in August on which this feast shall happen to fall.

up treasures of wisdom, goodness, and sanctity.

If we want to know our Lord she will teach us. His words are in her Heart. That Heart is a faithful image of His.

Let us go, then, to her feet, and ask her to teach us some of those lessons that are hidden in her sweet Heart.

III.

“And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”

The Heart of Mary was broken on Mount Calvary, and then we were hidden within its depths.

Truly may she say, “I have you in my Heart.”

In heaven that Heart, now healed of its life wound, and glorified, still thinks of us, still pleads for us with exceeding might before the throne of God.

Who can resist the cry of a Mother's Heart?

Let us, then, cling to our Mother, put our trust in her, and let her plead our cause.

Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

SEPTEMBER.

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SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

SEPTEMBER 1st.

Our Lord at Bethany.

I.

“Now it came to pass that He entered into a certain town, and a certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house.”

Greatly did Martha esteem the honour of this visit. Does our Lord ever enter your house, and do you show Him honour, love, and devotion? Certainly He often comes into the house of your heart. How do you treat Him?

II.

“And she had a sister called Mary, who, sitting also at the Lord’s feet, heard His word.”

Here we again meet the loving Magdalene in the place she loved so well, at the feet of Jesus. Join with her, go and lay your head at those beloved feet ; listen to His words in the secret of your soul, and obey those inspirations He will surely send you.

III.

“But Martha was busy about much serving.”

These two sisters had a different vocation. Martha was the mistress of the house, while Mary was able to lead a life of prayer. Imitate the activity of Martha in your charge or employment. Time is precious, and we must be busy. God cannot endure a slow, negligent, and unwilling service. Pray for the grace of diligence in working for Him.

SEPTEMBER 2nd.**The Complaint of St. Martha.****I.**

“Who stood and said: Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me.”

St. Martha allowed her love for hospitality to go too far, and it led her to interfere with her sister, and even to dictate to our Blessed Lord. Do you never interfere with others, by criticisms on their conduct, instead of leaving them to the care of our Lord?

II.

“And the Lord, answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary.”

In what a gentle way does our dear Lord reprimand His faithful servant. He knew how she loved Him. He

wanted her to be perfect. Never lose your interior peace in times of hurry and difficulty, and be on your guard about over eagerness in the work which, though hard, you naturally like best.

III.

“Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

It is sweet to serve our Lord on earth, but that will end with time. Our union with Him, which we began by prayer, will last for ever. Therefore never let us neglect prayer or our other spiritual duties by our own fault, under the pretext of doing good to others. The unspiritual will never do much for God. Work for Him, then, generously, but often go to find new strength, sitting, like Mary, at His feet.

SEPTEMBER 3rd.

Mission of the Seventy-Two.

I.

“The Lord appointed also other seventy-two; and He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come.”

Our Lord chose carefully those who were sent to save souls. He said to them, “The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few.”

We are all called upon in our degree to save souls, and we can never do it save by self-devotedness and deep humility.

II.

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send labourers into His harvest.”

Do you often pray for the priesthood of Christ’s Church, that they may be men after God’s own Heart, humble,

self-forgetting, obedient to His will? The Church has dedicated certain days in the year for fasting and prayer for this object, for the sanctity of the priesthood is the great means to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

III.

“Woe to thee, Corozain; woe to thee, Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”

Surely these words should make us fear abuse of grace. Has not God done far more for you than for many millions of others? Are not you a child of His Church, enjoying the full light of faith? Has He not “set your feet in a spacious place,” and led you in the paths of justice, for this our name’s sake? Ask the grace of a grateful heart.

SEPTEMBER 4th.

The Lord's Prayer.

I.

"And it came to pass that, as He was in a certain place praying, one of His disciples said to Him: Lord, teach us to pray."

What a beautiful sight must it have been to watch our Lord at prayer. We can easily understand how it impelled this cry from the soul of one of those happy witnesses: "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus Christ is indeed the Master who alone can teach us to pray, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Say, then, from your heart, "Lord, teach me to pray."

II.

"And He said to them: When you pray, say."

With deep reverence and devotion should we study the prayer that our

Lord Himself taught us. We should strive to pierce into its deep meaning, and so be able to pray with spirit and in truth, "*Our Father*." We are to pray as children, "co-heirs with Jesus Christ." Are you really the child of God?

III.

"Who art in heaven."

God is everywhere, but His throne is in heaven, and there will all His children meet together. Heaven, then, is our home, our "Father's house," which we should sigh after in our exile here. See how pure and holy your life ought to be if you would not dishonour your Father. Often make acts of love to your good God, your tender Father.

SEPTEMBER 5th.

The Lord's Prayer.—*Continued.*

I.

“Hallowed be Thy name.”

The one great work a Christian has to do is to glorify and sanctify the name of God. Are you about this work? Does your conduct give glory to God?

II.

“Thy kingdom come.”

A true desire for God's kingdom is submission of heart and a longing for heaven. It is to desire that all may happen in the way necessary for your sanctification. Obey the inspirations of divine grace. Give yourself entirely to Jesus Christ, that He may reign over you. Love not this present life, but patiently endure it.

III.

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

Perfect conformity to God's will is to share the occupation of the angels, who are ever ready to fly to do His will. Be, then, docile, patient, and courageous in bearing crosses and trials. Do not fulfil God's will in a slovenly, imperfect way. Despise yourself, and be willing to be despised. Beg of God the grace to love His will, and to subdue your own will. Ask for grace to love His law, His precepts, His counsels, that your life on earth may be like that of the saints and angels in heaven.

SEPTEMBER 6th.

The Lord's Prayer.—*Continued*

I.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

We must show our confidence in God's goodness, our charity in praying for others as well as ourselves, our humility in recognizing we have nothing of ourselves, and expect help from God day

by day. Be grateful for the smallest things, for all are from God. We ask for daily bread, because we know not if we shall live till the morrow. Ask above all other things for the "Bread of Life," and go to each communion as if it were your last.

II.

"And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors."

God makes His pardon of us depend on our pardon of others. Never cherish any secret resentment, and forget injuries, or, if you cannot, then pray for those who hurt you. Be on the look-out to do and say kind things, and then God will grant you a full pardon.

III.

"And lead us not into temptation."

We ask God not to allow us to bring on temptations by our own presumption or carelessness, but only let us meet those He wills we should encounter. For some must come, and we shall never

be tempted beyond our strength to resist.

“Deliver us from evil.” From the past evil that our sins deserve, from the present evil of falling again, from the future evil that shall last for ever. Study, then, this prayer, and say again and again, “Lord, teach me to pray.”

SEPTEMBER 7th.

The Importunate Friend.

I.

“And He said to them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not; I cannot rise and give to thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, because of his importunity he shall rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

Prayer cannot be called such unless it is persevering, and if perseverance

can touch the selfish human heart, how much more the Heart of God ?

II.

“He will not rise and give him because he is his friend.”

Ponder on the parable. Is not he who comes at midnight unreasonable and troublesome ? Yet our Lord does not condemn him. Fear not, then, to pray in the night of your sin and misery. Tell our Lord you have nothing to give your poor soul, nor the souls of others, if He does not rise and give you all you need.

III.

“Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.”

Do you really believe those words ? If so, why are your prayers so feeble ? Often you do not *ask*. Do you *seek* ? Try hard to obtain your petitions. And do you *knock*, by penance, by getting others to help you, by making sacrifices ? Be, then, in future earnest in prayer.

SEPTEMBER 8th.**Our Lady's Birthday.****I.**

"I came to a body undefiled."

Look with loving reverence on the cradle where is sleeping the child of Joachim and Anne, the future Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven and earth. Join with the happy angels around this immaculate and perfect creature. Prostrate yourself in spirit before the child of benediction, and ask her to obtain your sanctification.

II.

"For all good things come to me together with her."

The birth of Mary was the dawning of God's great mercy to men. She was the morning star that preceded the rising of the Sun of Justice. Have you been indifferent to the gifts God has sent you by Mary? And yet they are the only

real good gifts you can have. See and value them more.

III.

“For she is an infinite treasure to men.”

When you behold the grandeur of this child, who was so little in the eyes of men, desire that she may be loved and known by many souls, who will receive, through her, special graces, so that God may be glorified in heaven by a greater number of His elect, servants and clients of Mary. Let your heart speak to your Mother to-day. Surely she will refuse you nothing.

SEPTEMBER 9th.

Feast of the Holy Name of Mary.*

I.

“And the Virgin’s name was Mary.”
Blessed and glorious name, borne by

* This Meditation can be transferred to the day in the Octave on which this Feast shall fall.

her who was the first of the virgin army. Its very sound speaks to us of her immaculate purity, her spotless virginity. "Oh Mary, how sweet is thy name." Do I often invoke this blessed name? Do I put my trust in my Virgin Mother Mary?

II.

"Mary, of whom was born Jesus."

This dear name speaks to us of all she who bore it did for our fallen race. She, by her obedience, repaired the fault of Eve. She accepted her high destiny, and brought forth the Saviour, the Redeemer of the world. Shall not her name be dear to me "as oil poured out?" "Mother of God, and my Mother."

III.

"Is not His Mother called Mary?"

So spake contemptuously the people of Nazareth, little dreaming how that name was to be exalted and honoured throughout the earth and in heaven.

What an example of deep humility was our Blessed Lady ever to us! She

was content to be known as Mary the wife of the carpenter, and the Mother of the carpenter's Son. Am I contented with a lowly lot, which makes me more like my Mother? Ask her, by the sweetness of her name, to make you humble.

SEPTEMBER 10th.

The Rich Miser.

I.

“And He spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do?”

The increase of his riches only brought him anxiety and disquiet. He did not thank God for them, nor desire to benefit others. “I have no room where to bestow my fruits.” Are you selfish about the gifts God has given you, either temporal or spiritual?

II.

“But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”

When we die we can take nothing with us. “How, then,” says St. Ambrose, “can we call them ours?” Yes, there is one thing we can take,—Jesus Christ. He will be with us in the way, if we so desire it. Keep, then, close to Him in life, and He will be close to you in death.

III.

“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.”

If you died to-night, should you appear before God with empty hands? Listen to the advice of your Lord, “Sell what you possess, and give alms; make to yourself bags which grow not old.” Do you keep anything solely for your own gratification? “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” Give your love to Jesus Christ, and He will give His to you, which shall be your eternal treasure.

SEPTEMBER 11th.

The Dispute of a Heritage.

I.

“Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”

Let your thoughts dwell on the eternal heritage which no man can take from you. This man, so eager about earthly riches, was one who listened to our Lord's teaching. We can, then, be half-hearted in His service. Is not the time of your prayers often taken up with your cares and your business?

II.

“But He said to him: Man, who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you?”

Our Lord came to teach us heavenly things, and has nothing to do with disputes of this world. Never mix yourself up in affairs that do not concern you, and never let your own peace

be disturbed about anything that belongs solely to earth.

III.

“A man’s life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth.”

Are you really detached from this world? Do you heap up superfluous things? Sometimes those who can make great sacrifices hesitate about trifles. What a folly it would be to let little things come between your soul and Jesus Christ. Ask grace that you may love your Master above all that is created.

SEPTEMBER 12th.

The Cure of Dropsy.

I.

“When Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day, to eat bread, they watched Him.”

This is another instance of that detestable habit of watching and criticising others, which does so much harm among those who are otherwise spiritual.

“And there was a certain man that had the dropsy.” All suffering attracted the tender Heart of Jesus. Present yourself, then, before Him, and ask your cure.

II.

“And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But they held their peace.”

They could not answer Him, but they did not choose to own their defeat. See if this is at all like you. Are you ever too proud to own yourself conquered when you have been obstinate or mistaken?

III.

“But He, taking him, healed him, and sent him away.”

The least touch of Jesus could heal the sick body, and it is equally powerful

with the sick soul. Come, then, to Him with your spiritual maladies,—that self-love, which puffs you up; those passions, that destroy your peace. Humble yourself, and remember none but a divine hand can cure you. Submit to Him, and let Him work His will in you.

SEPTEMBER 13th.

Choosing the Lowest Place.

I.

“And He spoke also to them: When you are invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place.”

Humility is self-knowledge, and renders it impossible for us to prefer ourselves to others, or to seek for distinction. Never wish to be put forward. If men knew you as God knows you, where would they put you? Never give self preference over another, for fear it should be preference over Jesus Christ, for he whom you disdain will be preferred by God. See our Lord in-

all others, and then you will know they have the right to pass before you.

II.

“But when thou art invited, go sit down in the lowest place.”

Our Lord tells you to take the place He chose. He “annihilated Himself.” No one can go beyond that. Do you not wish to be near our Lord? If so, you must be the last and the least of all. Real humility loves outward contempt. Does not the lowest place really belong to you?

III.

“Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The knowledge of our own nothingness is a great grace. Humility is the foundation of all other virtues, and will lead us to love our Lord, to obtain His graces, and at last to share His glory. Look often at your own misery, and be content to be judged by others as you judge yourself before God.

SEPTEMBER 14th.

Choosing the Lowest Place.—*Continued.*

I.

“When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the feeble, the lame, and the blind.”

Very great is the difference between our Lord and the people of this world. It is easy to be kind to those who will be kind to us, who are congenial, who suit us. Are you kind to the stupid and rough, the ignorant and sickly, the people whom you do not naturally like?

II.

“And thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made to thee at the resurrection of the just.”

Do not these words excite you to great generosity in God's service? What does it signify if we meet with

ingratitude or unkindness from others ? If we are labouring for God, He will reward us, and that reward will be a hundredfold.

III.

“When one of them that sat at table with Him had heard these things, he said to Him : Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”

But we have not to wait for heaven ; we can eat even on earth the “Bread of Angels.” Adore your Lord in the Eucharist. Behold His omnipotence in contrast to your nothingness, His sanctity in contrast to your malice and weakness. Say to Him, “What art Thou, my God ; and what am I, that Thou shouldst annihilate the infinite distance between Thee and myself ?”

SEPTEMBER 15th.

The Great Supper.

I.

“But He said to him: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.”

Jesus Christ has called us all to the eucharistic banquet. The supper is great, for the whole world may come in to it. It is ever going on, and shall endure till time shall end. Every one who comes shall receive all.

“Whether one or thousands eat,
All receive the self-same meat,
Nor the less for others leave.”

II.

“And he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready.”

Our Lord wants to make us happy even in this life, so full of sorrow, labour, and suffering. He alone is our true joy, and so He gives us Himself. His ser-

vants are ever calling the world to the banquet, and saying, "It is ready." Do they come? Alas, no! Pray, then, for those who know not Jesus in His sacrament.

III.

"And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

These are figures of the three principal obstacles which separate men from God,—pride, avarice, and sensuality.

"Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Bring in hither the poor, the feeble, the blind, and the lame."

Then let us take courage and hope. Among this crowd let us find our place, poor in mind, feeble in God's service,

blind in spiritual knowledge, maimed by sin. Yet the compassionate Heart of Jesus Christ calls us, and in Him we shall find all the mercy and all the grace we need.

SEPTEMBER 16th.

The Object of our Lord's Coming.

I.

"I am come to send fire on the earth."

This divine fire was cast into your soul at your baptism. Have you kept it burning within you? Have you corresponded to that intense desire our Lord has to be loved by you? Ask our Lord to melt your cold heart more and more.

II.

"And what will I but that it be kindled?"

From your heart the flame of love ought to spring forth, raising you to heaven, and exciting others to love

Jesus Christ. He comes in Holy Communion to make a heaven of your heart. Are you not happy with Him? Is your heart a holy place, glowing with charity?

III.

“And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?”

Our Lord was indeed consumed by the fire of His love, and became a victim for you. Ought not you in your turn to become a victim for His love? Whoever has no zeal for souls has no love for Jesus Christ, has never understood His Sacred Heart. His love was so great that He longed for His Passion, in which He was to give Himself to us, first on His cross, and then in His tabernacle. Those who suffer gladly are always close to Him, who so loved suffering. Without sorrow there is no living in love.

SEPTEMBER 17th.

A Sinner Forgiven.

I.

“And the Scribes and Pharisees bring to Him a woman taken in adultery ; and they set her in the midst.”

They brought this woman to Him in the hope that He would give a wrong sentence. Happy is the sinner who is met by divine mercy.

“But Jesus, stooping down, wrote with His finger on the ground.”

He who knows our secret thoughts is never hard in His judgments ; and we, in our ignorance, are constantly condemning others. Our Lord wrote upon the sand to show us that true repentance can efface sin.

II.

“He lifted up Himself, and said to them: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote

on the ground. But they, hearing this, went out one by one, and Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst."

With one word our Lord put to confusion the malice of His enemies. It is supposed that He was now writing their secret sins, and each one, fearing the revelation, slipped away. If you have a real horror of your own sins, you will not be swift in accusing others.

III.

"Then Jesus, lifting up Himself, saith to her: Hath no man condemned thee? And she said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee; go, and now sin no more."

Our Lord wishes us to accuse ourselves, and then He pardons us. One day you will be alone with Jesus Christ; your nearest and dearest will be gone. What will give you peace in that hour? To have obeyed His word. *Go, and sin no more.* Do not pain the tender Heart

of Jesus by your infidelity. Strive to love much Him who has forgiven so much.

SEPTEMBER 18th.

Our Lord's Answer to the Pharisees.

I.

"There came some of the Pharisees, saying to Him: Depart and get Thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill Thee."

Their motive was not care for our Lord, but envy, and a desire to get rid of Him. Have a horror of all deceit and double dealing. If you seek your own satisfaction, while you profess to seek the glory of God, you are double. Alas! there are too many instances of those who try to play a double part, even with God.

II.

"And He said to them: Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and

.

do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated."

With what calm courage our Lord answers these evil men. Try to please Him only, and do not seek the praise and notice of men.

III.

"Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following; because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

Learn never to be cast down by difficulties, but to persevere in duty, trusting in God. Be content to live or die, as God wills. Jerusalem means city of peace; and we ought all to die in the peace of God. Let Jesus Christ rule your life; and live, during *time*, in that Heart in which you desire to spend eternity.

SEPTEMBER 19th.**Feast of the Seven Dolours of our
Blessed Lady.*****I.**

“And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”

When our Lady was called to be the Mother of God, she was also called to be the Mother of Sorrows. Scarcely had she known the joy of her divine maternity, when she was told that “a sword should pierce her soul.” Then she had to fly to Egypt, and endure fatigue, privation, and agonizing anxiety. And in a few years came her three days anguish, when the fears were realized, and she lost her Child. Her Heart was ever foreseeing and dreading the future. But these sorrows are now her crown of glory.

* This Meditation can be transferred to the day on which the Feast will fall.

II.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother."

Our Lady was at length called to a martyrdom of suffering. She met, on the road to Calvary, her Divine Son. She saw Him stripped and nailed to the cross, and she stood by that cross with a broken heart. Never was love like hers, therefore never was grief like hers. She nailed to the cross her soul, her heart, her life, and when the Sacred Heart was pierced, the lance went, in spirit, through the Heart of Mary, and opened it for us.

Ask for grace to suffer willingly with Jesus and Mary.

III.

"Behold thy Mother."

Let us look at our model. She stands beneath the cross, calm in the midst of the greatest sorrow the human heart could know. She listens to the words of Jesus, and she unites her sacrifice

with His. We are born to suffer, and never can we obtain close union with Jesus Christ save by embracing suffering. Close was the union between Jesus and Mary in the Incarnation; closer still on Calvary. Do more than accept sorrow, love it; for it makes you like Jesus crucified, and Mary, Mother of Dolours. Ask her to obtain this grace for you.

SEPTEMBER 20th.

The Fewness of the Elect.

I.

“And a certain man said to Him: Lord, are they few that are saved?”

Our Lord would not answer this desire to search into the secrets of God. He said, “Strive to enter in by the narrow gate.” Is this your constant effort, by humbling your pride, restraining your passions and desires, and detaching yourself from creatures?

II.

“For many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able.”

How few there are who profit by the crosses of life, who serve God faithfully in tribulation and suffering, who despise the world and live in the fear of God. How few there are who do penance. Strive earnestly to be among these few.

III.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

These words are very terrible. Never can we feel secure of our salvation, however high our vocation, or numerous our graces. We must be in earnest. A cowardly soul is soon conquered. To gain heaven we must fight for it. Worthy communions are, as it were, security for our eternal happiness. Ask for a loving fervour.

SEPTEMBER 21st.

Cure of the Infirm Woman.

I.

“A woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all.”

This is a symbol of the imperfect soul, constantly looking at earthly things, and unable to raise its thoughts and desires towards heaven. Let your heart be lifted up on high; let your intention, which is the eye of the soul, be ever fixed on Jesus.

II.

“Whom when Jesus saw He called her unto Him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And He laid His hands upon her.”

It is our Lord alone who can take off the weight of sin that crushes the soul down. No matter how heavy the burden, how deep the stain, we have only

to kneel contrite at His feet, and His sacred hands in holy absolution are laid upon us, and by the touch of His grace He will raise us from imperfection and tepidity.

III.

“And immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”

When the soul is set free from the burden of sin she begins to live a new life. Does your conduct show the fruit of your frequent confessions and communions? Is your life becoming more like that of our Lord? Do not debase the soul that is the temple of the Most High.

SEPTEMBER 22nd.

Our Lord Reproves the Pharisees,

I.

“A certain Pharisee prayed Him to dine with him; and He went in, and sat down to eat. And the Pharisee

began to say, thinking within himself, why He was not washed before dinner."

Do you ever watch the conduct of others with curiosity or spite? Do you ever pass rash judgments on others?

"And the Lord said to him: Now you Pharisees do make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity."

Do you neglect serious duties, and make a great point of trifling observances, which are pleasing to you?

II.

"Give alms, and all things are clean unto you."

Are you generous and liberal according to your power? Giving alms does not mean bestowing what we can do without, but it means making real sacrifices which will bring down on us graces from our Lord, who rewards so bountifully.

III.

"Woe to you, because you tithe mint, and rue, and every herb, and pass over judgment and the charity of God."

Outward strictness is of no avail without inward mortification. To be assiduous in prayer, and hard and selfish to others, will not profit us before God. Does our Lord ever reprove you on this point? Then imitate not these Pharisees, who only became angry at His warnings; but humble yourself at His sacred feet, and amend.

SEPTEMBER 23rd.

Opinions Concerning our Lord.

I.

“The Jews therefore sought Him, and said : Where is He ?”

The reputation of our Lord was spread far and wide, and men sought to hear and see Him. Many people saw Him once, and never forgot Him. One look, one word, changed their whole life. You need never say, “Where is He?” You know He is in the tabernacle. Is your life one with Him?

II.

“Some said; He is a good Man. And others said; No; but He seduceth the people.”

Those who were good themselves admired our Lord; the evil and corrupt declaimed against Him. We judge very differently when we are influenced by charity or by passion. Have you not often ridiculed those who were pious, criticized them, spoken against them? If so, humble yourself.

III.

“Yet no man spoke openly of Him, for fear of the Jews.”

Are you a slave to wretched human respect? Does the fear of what people will say prevent you from showing yourself to be the servant of the Crucified?

“Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying: How doth this Man know letters, having never learned?”

Such was the weak, blind judgment of the Eternal Wisdom. Do you, who

know that He is the one great Teacher of the world, humbly seek His will and listen to His inspirations. Ask for this grace.

SEPTEMBER 24th.

Feast of our Lady of Mercy.

I.

“Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.”

One of the beautiful titles of our Lady is that of Mother of Mercy. She is not our judge, but only our advocate. Her Heart is full of boundless pity and deepest compassion for her poor erring children. Great, then, should be your devotion and trust in her.

II.

“Full of mercy and good fruits.”

A true devotion to our Lord and His holy Mother is sure to inspire deeds of mercy. So those blessed saints who undertook the heroic task of delivering

Christians from slavery, and who founded an order to carry on their work, called it the Order of our Lady of Redemption, or Mercy. Do you show your devotion to Mary, by striving to set others free from the slavery of sin?

III.

“Mercy unto you, and peace and charity be fulfilled.”

The service of our Lady is full of sweetness. Most generously does she reward all that we do for her. Let those who have devoted themselves in this way bear witness. It was good for them to enter the service of this heavenly Mistress, and, instead of being the slaves of sin or their own self-love, to consecrate themselves to her. How mercifully she bears with our shortcomings and defects, and if we only persevere in our trust and humble service, she will indeed turn upon us “those merciful eyes” of hers, and “after this our exile show unto us the precious fruit of her womb, Jesus.”

SEPTEMBER 25th.

**Attempts of the Pharisees to Injure
our Lord.**

I.

"The rulers and Pharisees sent ministers to apprehend Him. Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me."

Do not lose the precious time of your intercourse with our Lord on earth, for life is passing away, and your salvation has to be won. Time is given to you only that you may know, love, and imitate Jesus.

"You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me."

Life is passing, eternity is at hand, and time lost cannot be regained. Do not run the risk of hearing our Lord say, "Where I am thither ye cannot come."

II.

“No man laid hands upon Him.”

“And when the Pharisees asked their ministers why they had thus acted, they said: Never did man speak like this Man.”

Resolve to follow Jesus Christ in singleness of heart; for He is the light of the world, the life of souls, and His cross is the only way to heaven.

III.

“The Pharisees therefore answered: Are you also seduced?”

Our Lord reveals Himself to the humble and simple, and hides Himself from those full of self-esteem. If you have to bear reproach for our Lord's sake, rejoice that you are allowed so far to imitate Him who was outraged and insulted for you.

SEPTEMBER 26th.

Our Lord's Discourse to the People.

I.

"Jesus stood, and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink."

Undismayed by His enemies, our Lord spoke with authority. He is ever teaching His people. Are you listening to Him? Are you thirsting for the "living water," the river of God's grace? St. Austin says, "The soul that is full of self-love, or love of the world, has no room for the love of Christ."

II.

"Some said: This is a prophet indeed."

They were too much afraid of the Pharisees to say more. Human respect is a fetter upon spiritual progress. It makes us disloyal to our Lord. And this cowardice is by no means rare.

Ask our Lord to make you bold and fearless in His service.

III.

“Others said, This is the Christ.”

Yes, we know it well. He is the Christ, the Redeemer of men. What joy to think of the inexhaustible treasures of love His Heart contains for each of us. Give Him all He asks, refuse Him nothing, let Him be the source of living water to you. Be empty of self-love, for Jesus alone can quench the thirst of those who sigh after Him.

SEPTEMBER 27th.

Cure of the Man Born Blind.

I.

“And Jesus, who was passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth; he sat and begged.”

Have you not often been begging from the world the pleasures of distrac-

tion? What would become of you if our Lord had left you alone? Every trouble, every misfortune, our Lord can turn to your spiritual benefit. Trust in His mercy.

II.

“He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe.”

Thus did our Lord exact humility and blind obedience from this man; if he had reasoned he would not have been cured.

“He went therefore, and washed; and he came seeing.”

His obedience was prompt, his faith and confidence strong. Do you thank our Lord as you ought for the light and grace He gives you?

III.

“They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened? He answered: That Man, who is called Jesus, made

clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash; and I went, I washed, and I see."

He told the story without fear. Are you courageous in God's service?

"And they said to him: Where is He? He saith: I know not."

You know where to find our Lord. Do you make use of this knowledge? Are you often at His feet? Do you listen to His voice?

"They say to the blind man again: What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said: He is a prophet."

He was not wearied by their impertunity. Do you persevere in your resolutions, and day by day give God more glory?

SEPTEMBER 28th.

Cure of the Man Born Blind.—Continued.

I.

“The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they had called the parents of him that had received his sight.”

Passion blinds the intellect. See if you are not given to criticize and condemn the good works of others. The Jews called the man who was cured, and told him that the miracle had not been wrought by our Lord. But he persisted in declaring the truth. Never be afraid or dismayed in God's service, and always defend your faith when attacked.

II.

“Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”

Happy was the man to be ill-treated for Christ's sake. Blessed will you be

if you have to suffer persecution for your faith. Accustom yourself to bear little contradictions patiently, that you may be ready for great trials. Let your deeds, far more than your words, show your love for Jesus Christ.

III.

“Jesus heard they had cast him out ; and when He had found him He said : Dost thou believe in the Son of God ?”

And because, as says St. Cyril, he had suffered insult for our Lord’s sake, the gift of faith was given. What does the world’s contempt signify if you have our Lord ? You have truly seen Him by faith, and often can it be said, “It is He who talketh with thee.” Say to Him, then, from your soul’s depths, “I believe, Lord ;” and falling down at His feet, with all the strength of soul and heart adore Him.

SEPTEMBER 29th.

Feast of St. Michael the Archangel.

I.

“Michael your prince.”

Let us contemplate to-day this great and glorious spirit, the chief of the heavenly host. The prophet tells us his face was as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp. When you are downcast, and suffer from the sense of your own weakness in temptation, do you think about and invoke this mighty spirit?

II.

“Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, that old serpent who is called the devil; and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

Do you sufficiently reflect that the devil is a conquered being? Once bright and glorious in his golden armour,

shining like the sun, he is cast down on the earth, prostrate at the feet of St. Michael, his golden wings all smirched, his light quenched in darkness, his strength in impotence. A little Christian child can defy him in safety. Only be brave, "pure and upright in integrity," in temptation, and the devils shall "scud away as cowards from the fight."

III.

"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ."

Turn from the sight of that false defeated traitor and his crew, and behold St. Michael looking up to God. His golden armour shines the brighter, no stain of combat has touched him. See him giving the glory to his God. No thought of self casts a shadow on his beauteous face. He stands, the living image of truth, while beneath his feet is trampled the "liar from the beginning."

Ask this great angel to obtain for you a horror of delusion and deceit, and a great frankness in dealing with God. Listen to the voice of conscience. Never try to disguise your actions under specious pretexts. Be true and simple in all things, and then you too shall conquer, and with St. Michael reign for ever.

SEPTEMBER 30th.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

I.

“ There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and no man did give unto him; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.”

Poverty is dear to our Lord. Those who are really poor are written in His Hands and in His Heart. Lazarus is a picture of one bearing poverty and suffering with love, and desiring only necessities, the *crumbs* of earthly things. Do you desire nothing more than these?

II.

“The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. And the rich man also died, and was buried in hell.”

No earthly possessions will cross the threshold of eternity.

“He cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.”

His burning thirst was the punishment of his gluttony. Now look at Lazarus. Many angels came to bear him to heaven in triumph. Do not fear the mortifications of poverty, for it is the road to salvation.

III.

“And Abraham said to him : Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

How can any one imagine he will share the glory of Jesus who has refused to share in His sufferings, His poverty, and His virtues ?

Have, then, a horror of all that the world esteems so highly. Imitate Lazarus in his patience, courage, and resignation, that you may share his eternal bliss.



SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

OCTOBER.

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SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR OCTOBER.

OCTOBER 1st.

Our Lord Blessing Little Children.

I.

“And they brought to Him young children, that He might touch them.”

What a lovely sight it must have been to see our Lord surrounded by little children! How tenderly He gazed on them, undefiled by actual sin. They were the types and models of the souls that are dear to Him, the poor, simple, and humble.

II.

“And the disciples rebuked them that brought them. And when Jesus saw it He was much displeased.”

Have you ever driven away the little ones of Christ, or neglected to bring them to Him?

“Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.”

Heaven is the home and heritage of humble, child-like souls.

III.

“And embracing them, and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them.”

Oh, thrice blessed children, caressed by Jesus our Lord! Yet, need we envy them? Has He not often laid His hands on you in holy absolution, and caressed you with the “kisses of His mouth” in Holy Communion; and does He not draw you the nearer to Him the more you make yourself a little child?

Ask Him to give you more and more of humility, confidence in Him, and singleness of heart. “My God, if I am not worthy of Thy caresses, at least lay Thy hands upon me, to bless and ‘o pardon.”

OCTOBER 2nd.

Feast of the Angel Guardians.

I.

“Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will send My angel, who shall go before thee.”

God has given each of us an angel, whose mission is to defend us from the devil, to protect us, inspire us with holy thoughts, and give us mighty aid in the work of our salvation. What do you owe to this prince of the heavenly court? What homage and gratitude do you pay him?

II.

“And keep thee in thy journey.”

This glorious being does not disdain the lowly task of watching over you. His sole desire is to do God's will. Do you imitate him, by your devotion in serving others? Do you love them as your angel loves you?

III.

“Take notice of him, and hear his voice.”

Every effort of your angel is to make you holy, and to win for you a death precious in the eyes of God.

Ask his pardon, then, for the grief you have so often given him; thank him for his goodness to you. Resolve often to recall his presence. Love and reverence him, yea, and fear him, as the faithful witness who one day, before God’s throne, will have to give account of all your actions.

OCTOBER 3rd.

The Way of Perfection.

I.

“A certain man, running up, and kneeling before Him, asked Him: Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?”

How eagerly did this young man

correspond to the first impulse of divine grace, and seek after perfection.

Our Lord answered: "Why callest thou Me good? None is good but one, that is God."

We cannot be good or not, just as we choose. God must help us, and we must seek that help.

II.

"Thou knowest the commandments. But he, answering, said to Him: Master, all these things I have observed from my youth."

A command comes before a counsel. We must fear God before we can love Him. This man had feared God and kept His law, and our Lord was ready to bestow on him the choicest gift. Do you keep back the graces God has ready for you, by stubbornness or tepidity?

III.

"And Jesus, looking on him, loved him."

Fidelity and freedom from sin make the soul dear to our Lord.

Then, having gazed on this favoured being with those divine Eyes that pierce the soul's inmost depths, He said, "One thing is wanting unto thee." One thing, that is, the total sacrifice of self. Is not our Lord saying these words to you? Are not His Eyes fixed on you? Does He not love you with an everlasting love? Oh, be not "deaf when Christ calls."

OCTOBER 4th.

The Way of Perfection.—*Continued.*

I.

"Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

"Go." Have done with the world here is the first thing. "Sell whatsoever thou hast." Be poor with Jesus Christ: for you "cannot have two joys;" you cannot enjoy the good things of earth, and be closely united with Jesus. Give

to the poor. Be full of charity for others, if you would be perfect.

II.

“And come, follow Me.”

Give up self; give up your heart in virginal detachment, and your will, judgment, and liberty by obedience. But self-renunciation is hard to nature.

III.

“Who, being struck at that saying, went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

He went away from that divine call, from the gaze of those mild, grave Eyes, and from the love of that all-perfect Heart.

“Sorrowful.” Who are so unhappy as spiritual cowards, tepid in God’s service, refusing sacrifices, and then suffering from the pricks of conscience?

Never be among those who say to our Lord, “I will give Thee so much, but I cannot give Thee all.” Pray not to be “deaf when Christ calls.”

OCTOBER 5th.

The Danger of Riches.

I.

“And Jesus, looking round about, saith to His disciples: How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God.”

Our Lord was sad when He saw this beloved soul go away from Him, the type of so many who, like him, hear that divine call, “Come, follow Me,” and drown its sound in their souls.

II.

“And when the disciples had heard this, they wondered very much, and said: Who then can be saved?”

This wonder of the apostles shows us that it is not only those whom the world calls rich that our Lord meant, but all those who were not poor in spirit.

“Jesus again answering, saith to them: Children, how hard it is for them

that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God."

The desire for earthly comforts and honours, the striving after them, blinds the soul as much as their actual possession. The love of this world's good things is like a chain that binds the soul down.

III.

"And Jesus, looking on them, said: With men it is impossible, but not with God."

For all things are possible with God. Of ourselves we can do nothing; we are "of the earth, earthly," and we cling to its miserable pleasures and its perishable glories with tenacity. But God sends His grace, and miracles are wrought. Thrones and riches, comforts and honours, are forsaken for Christ's sake. Nature passes through the narrow gate and up the straight way that leads to life.

Has God worked this miracle in your soul?

OCTOBER 6th.

Forsaking all Things.

I.

“Then Peter answering, said to Him: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee. What therefore shall we have?”

All things, in the case of the twelve, did not mean great possessions; but riches are of no importance in themselves to God. What He cares for is the will, the complete attachment to Him, the *keeping nothing back*.

II.

“And Jesus answering, said: Amen, I say to you, there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My sake and the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time.”

Generous indeed is our Divine Master. He rewards even to overflowing the

sacrifices we make for Him. Even in this life we are rewarded, provided we truly leave all things. Those who give a half-hearted service are never at peace.

III.

“Houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come life everlasting.”

Remark that our Lord puts house as the first of our sacrifices, because nothing is so hard as to give up our own self, and to let Jesus reign over us. When He is in our heart we can make all other sacrifices cheerfully.

We must be ready for persecutions if we thus follow Jesus Christ. The world cannot bear to see itself despised; but the fashion of the world passeth away, and those who have contemned it shall have life everlasting. Pray that so may be your lot.

OCTOBER 7th.

On Holy Virginity.

I.

“His disciples say to Him : It is not expedient to marry. He said to them : All receive not this word, but they to whom it is given.”

No one knew the blessedness and happiness of holy virginity till the coming of our Lord. He is the King of virgins, born of a Virgin Mother. And even now no one can understand this truth, unless they study the teachings of our Lord, and learn the science of the saints in the school of Jesus crucified.

II.

“He that can receive it, let him receive it.”

Only a certain number are called to this great and singular privilege. The virgin life will ever remain a mystery for the world. How deep should be the gratitude of those called by God to this

holy state. Fervent prayer and unceasing vigilance must be their armour. They must guard themselves at every point, and of their conduct it should be said, "Their conversation is in heaven."

III.

"Let him receive it."

Fidelity to grace brings light about our vocation, and enables us in full liberty of spirit to make our choice.

And those who are called to this higher life should joyfully obey the invitation. There they live in calm peacefulness, because Jesus reigns over them. They give joy to the Heart of Him "who feedeth among the lilies." Pray often to our Lady, the Queen of Virgins and of holy purity.

OCTOBER 8th.

Our Lady's Maternity.*

I.

"They found the Child with Mary His Mother."

Consider the closeness of the union between Jesus and Mary. A child is part of a mother's own self; so that our Lady is, as it were, lost in her Child. We know not how to separate them. To pray to the one is to pray to the other, so closely are these Hearts knit together.

II.

"And His Mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us?"

Many are the titles of love and adoration our dear Lord allows us to use towards Him. We call Him Father, Friend, Brother, Spouse, but we may not say to Him, "Son," we may not call Him "my Child." But our Lady

* This Meditation can be transferred to the day on which the Feast shall fall.

possessed that privilege, and could speak to Him in a tone of authority. Oh! wonderful mystery is the power and dignity of Mary!

III.

“With one mind in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus.”

This ought to be the practical conclusion of our meditation. Since Mary is so great, what are our duties towards her? To imitate her, by staying in her company; to pray to her in such a way that her prayers become our prayers. Would you do this? be humble, patient, mortified. The way to love and honour the Mother is that whereby we love and honour the Son. Ask the grace to be a true and loving child. Make the words of St. Aloysius your own: “*Mother of God, my Mother!*”

OCTOBER 9th.

Fearing God only.

I.

“Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.”

The martyrs listened to these words, and shed their blood to save their souls.

Do you, then, despise the persecution which would draw you away from our Lord ?

Are you free from human respect, or are you afraid of a word or a look ?

Faith and courage will have a special protection from God.

II.

“Yea, the very hairs of your head are numbered.”

No one can do us the least harm without the knowledge of God, and He will make it up to us in eternity. Your reputation, your health, your body, and soul are in the hands of God. Nothing

can happen without His permission. What can you fear, then, from your Creator and Redeemer ?

III.

“ Fear not therefore.”

Dismiss, then, all vain fears and foolish distrust. Accept good and evil with equal gratitude, and in God's sight the latter is more precious than the former. Submit to His adorable will, and be sure His help will be in proportion to your needs. Serve God freely from love. If you keep before your eyes the thought of His power, His holiness, and His goodness, exterior temptations will lose their attractions, and passions their strength. Penance will not be hard, and piety and charity not difficult.

OCTOBER 10th.

The Coming of Christ's Kingdom.

I.

“And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

It has no human pomp; it is the reign of holiness; its marks are humility, obedience, poverty, self-sacrifice, the exact opposites to pride, luxury, and worldly selfishness. Nothing that bears the seal of the world can be a part of the kingdom of God. Is that kingdom within you?

II.

“Neither should they say: Behold here, or behold there.”

The kingdom of God is universal in all nations and in all classes. No one need be left out.

Thank your God that you are in the bosom of the Catholic Church. Commiserate those in heresy, schism, or

paganism. Pray and labour for their conversion.

III.

“For lo, the kingdom of God is within you.”

From the tabernacle Jesus reigns over the world, and by Holy Communion He enters each heart. He wants your heart to be a heaven, where He can reign, as He does among His angels. “By nature,” says St. John Damascene, “we are below the angels, but by union with Jesus Christ in communion we rise above them.” Never, therefore, destroy this reign in your heart.

OCTOBER 11th.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

I.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.”

This vineyard is the Church, and the labourers all Christians, who have to pursue their different vocations.

“And having agreed for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.”

This penny is heaven, which is promised at the end of life.

II.

“And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner.”

We are not all called at the same age, nor to the same graces.

“But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith unto them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us.”

Are you standing idle, or are you yielding to our Lord as He draws you from self-ease and inaction, to love and serve Him with all your heart?

III.

“And when evening was come, they ived every man a penny.”

Have you not received a thousand times more grace than is actually necessary to salvation? Are you not sometimes like the ungrateful labourers, who murmured that the last were as the first? Are you ever jealous of the graces of others? Yet does not our Lord in Holy Communion give you Himself, and with Him all things? Try to be grateful to that good Master.

OCTOBER 12th.

Death of St. John Baptist.

I.

“For Herod had apprehended John, and bound him, and put him in prison.”

Why did our Lord allow this? Why did He not work a miracle, and deliver His forerunner? Because it is thus that He generally deals with those He loves. He lets them suffer much for His name's sake, that He may reward them here-

after. Constantly study how to accept sufferings wisely and well.

II.

“Give me here in a dish the head of John the Baptist.”

The life of this great man was sacrificed as a reward for a dance. Such is the way we argue foolishly. God so willed he should gain the martyr's crown.

Yet ponder on the terrible consequences to which our passions lead us. “The king was struck sad.” Remorse is a bitter suffering, and generally follows sin and self-indulgence.

III.

“And his disciples came and took the body, and buried it; and came and told Jesus.”

Let the faults of others serve for your spiritual advancement. Speak of them without necessity to none but Jesus, and let the fear of your own weakness make you cling to Him. The disciples of John tried to make up to our Lord for the loss He had sustained in His

faithful servant. Do you try to console the Heart of Jesus for the sins and outrages of misguided men ?

OCTOBER 13th.

The Good Samaritan.

I.

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead.”

When the soul leaves Jerusalem, the city of peace, it is at once in a dangerous road. Then comes the devil to strip it of grace and merit, till, deeply wounded by sin, it is spiritually dead. Human beings cannot help; they behold, and pass by. Was it ever thus with you ?

II.

“But a certain Samaritan came near, and was moved with compassion, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil

and wine ; and setting him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

What a true image of our all-merciful Lord ! He took pity on your soul, and poured in the oil of hope and the wine of His Precious Blood, binding up and healing your spiritual wounds. He placed you in the care of His angels and of His priests. He brought you to the only resting-place on earth, the Church of God, and paid your debts by the adorable sacrifice of the altar.

III.

"Go, and do thou in like manner."

Such was our Lord's command to those who admired the parable. Do you earnestly imitate the charity of Jesus Christ ? Do you see Him in others ? Are you full of compassion for sinners ? Do for others in your degree what Jesus has done for you. Strive to bring them back to Him, bear their burdens, pray for them, and try to show them what is the love of the Heart of Jesus.

OCTOBER 14th.

The Lost Sheep.

I.

“What man among you that hath a hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it?”

When we went astray in the paths of sin, Jesus our Shepherd left heaven, and came to find us. He spent His life in seeking His sheep. He has loved you more than His own life. Measure out your love for Him by that example.

II.

“And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing.”

We know how gladly our Lord welcomes us when we return to Him, how He helps our feeble efforts, taking us into His divine arms. He calls His saints, who are His friends and neighbours, to share His joy. Be, then faithful to this good Shepherd.

III.

“Even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.”

No reproach for the trouble given, no complaint of the fatigue and suffering; nothing but the joy of repossessing the soul so dearly bought. What wondrous love and devotion! Give, then, this joy to your Saviour, by your entire submission to Him, and your zealous endeavours to bring other souls to Him. Make up to Him, as far as you can, for the bitter pain you have given, and the glory of which you have deprived Him.

OCTOBER 15th.

Feast of St. Teresa.

I.

“Who shall find a valiant woman?”

Those who knew St. Teresa could have answered the prophet. Courage

was perhaps that which most distinguished her, and it is courage that makes the saints.

In the work of self-conquest, in the combat against temptation, in the labour of her reform, the difficulties were immense; but her courage rose above them all.

Are you easily cast down in God's service?

II.

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

Next to courage, St. Teresa was remarkable for the intensity of her love, or rather, her courage sprang from her love. She gave our Lord that deep passionate love which is so often wasted on the things of earth. And, unlike the affections of earth, it was enduring; it grew and strengthened in her soul as life went on. Do you love our Lord more and more the longer you live in His service?

III.

“He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you.”

St. Teresa was distinguished by her wisdom. Her spiritual writings have added to the treasures of the Church. She is among the small number of women who may be said to have *taught*. It was a rare gift from God, and St. Teresa won it by her great humility, her exceeding obedience to the least word of the Church, or of those charged to direct her.

Pray that you may teach others by the example of your humility and obedience.

OCTOBER 16th.

The Pharisee and the Publican.

I.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed.”

He put himself in a conspicuous place, that all might see and admire him. We can bring pride with us, even to the altar, to the feet of that God humbled and annihilated for us.

“O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, even as this publican.”

Vain-glory is a snare to those who are advancing in God's service.

“I fast twice in the week.” I devote myself entirely to God.

Humble yourself continually, and never try to rob God of a ray of the glory that belongs to Him alone.

II.

“And the publican, standing afar off.”

Real sanctity is founded on self-knowledge, by which we learn the corruption of our hearts, the malice of our minds, and the weakness of our will.

“Would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven.”

With lowly reverence should we come before our God. Can you ever humble yourself as much as He has for you?

"But struck his breast."

Humble souls own their faults, and easily yield to the opinions of others.

"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Have pity on me, O God, proud, hasty, revengeful as I am.

III.

"I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

On the road to heaven, the lower we place ourselves the more progress we make. Our Lord does not judge us by exterior actions, but by our hearts.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Then by the degree of humility you attain on earth will be the degree of your glory in heaven. Love all that humbles you; it makes you more like your Lord in the Eucharist; and as He, thus humbling Himself for us, shows forth the depth of His love, ask the grace of proving your love to Him by your humility.

OCTOBER 17th.

The Good Shepherd.

I.

“I am the good Shepherd.”

No title reveals the love of Jesus for us more than this of the Good Shepherd. He does indeed guide, protect, and feed His sheep. He calls us by His grace, guides us by His priests, and strengthens us to resist sin. Not one escapes His watchful eye. Say from your heart, “*Let not vain Thy labour be.*”

II.

“The sheep hear His voice; they know not the voice of strangers.”

Turn a deaf ear to the solicitations of nature, and listen to the voice of Jesus. He speaks to you by His example and His precepts, His grace and His love. But you must listen with a docile heart. What use will it be to know His will if you do not accomplish it?

Submit to God, who became obedient

that He might teach you humble dependence.

III.

“The sheep follow Him.”

What can there be greater on earth than to follow the steps of Jesus? When we act by our own will we precede Him, in place of following. To follow Him we must see Him, and dissipation can hide Him from us.

Follow Him, then, with courage unto your eternal bliss.

OCTOBER 18th.

The Good Shepherd.—*Continued.*

I.

“The good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.”

Jesus is the only Shepherd who has done this; for if some of His saints have imitated Him, they found far more than they lost, and gave less than they received.

All our graces flow from His wounds
and open side.

Heart wounded for my love, receive
me.

II.

“He shall go in and go out, and shall
find pasture.”

After having redeemed us, He would
give us no other food but His own Body
and Blood, becoming at the same time
the Shepherd and the Lamb.

Truly could He say He had come that
we might have life, and an abundant
life, the grace of sanctification.

What means of salvation are wanting
to you, from the cross to the tabernacle?

“Heart of my Shepherd, guard me.”

III.

“I know Mine, and Mine know Me.”

In return for all His devotion our
Lord asks from you a little love and a
good will.

He gives Himself to you, and all other
things with Him. Learn more and
more to know your Lord and your good
Shepherd. Study closely the Sacred

Heart. That Heart was not rent open till His life had been given for you.

Wounds given after death never close, and therefore His pierced side is a perpetual sign of His exceeding love and mercy.

Ask our Lord for the grace that your heart may be ever open to His will and His love.

“Will of the Heart of Jesus, dispose of my heart.”

OCTOBER 19th.

The Unjust Steward.

I.

“A certain rich man had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.”

God has given you life, and many gifts of nature and grace, that you may use them according to His will.

What use have you made of these? Can angels and men accuse you of having “wasted His goods?”

"And he called him, and said to him: Give an account of thy stewardship."

This day will come also to you. Terrible will it be if you are found to have used God's gifts as if they were your own, instead of being only entrusted to your care.

II.

"For now thou canst be steward no longer."

It is not enough merely not to have lost God's gifts, but we should have set a value on them, or rather, not to use them is to lose them.

Our Lord will say to you, "Give an account of your communions, for now they are ended for you."

Do you tremble at the thought? Make, then, each communion as if it were to be your last.

III.

"And the steward said within himself: What shall I do?"

He made no excuses; he knew his punishment was deserved. And when,

in the light of eternity, you see what have been those graces and gifts with which you have dealt so lightly, deep will be your regret.

“Our Lord,” says St. Leo, “who gives so liberally on earth, will demand a rigid account after death.” Be rigid now, then, with yourself, that when you meet your Judge you shall have little to fear.

OCTOBER 20th.

The Unjust Steward.—*Continued.*

I.

“To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed.”

In eternity we can no longer labour and do penance. You will be ashamed before the angels.

The poor steward in the parable tried to help himself by fraud; but *your* friends, the saints and elect of God, cannot help you then; it will be too late.

II.

“And the lord commended the unjust steward in that he had done wisely.”

Do you, then, wisely prepare for your account. Make a good use of your senses, your faculties, your time, and your will. Treat the graces of God with respect and love, for with them alone can you pay your spiritual debt, which is so heavy.

III.

“For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

Compare your care for your eternal destiny with human prudence for temporal interests, although they are never sure of the morrow, while you may enjoy your riches for all eternity.

Make haste, then, to pay the debts you owe to divine justice, by your fervent communions, and good works of mercy and charity.

OCTOBER 21st.

The Prodigal Son.

I.

“A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance.”

God has given us gifts of nature and grace, to help us to attain eternal life; and He has sheltered us in His house, the holy Catholic Church.

“And the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country.”

The ways of sin lead us far away from our God and Father. Divine grace is soon lost in the midst of the world.

II.

“And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine, and he began to be in want.”

Creatures can never satisfy the soul's hunger.

“And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his farm to feed swine.”

Every one who follows his passions is a miserable slave. Have you not wasted heavenly gifts, and then found your soul empty and barren?

Regret the past with loving contrition.

III.

“And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father’s house have plenty of bread, and I here perish with hunger?”

Many souls, with less graces than you have had, are far beyond you on the road to heaven.

“I will go to my father.”

Prayer for help is the first step.

“And say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.”

Deep humility is the second step.

“I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.”

The spirit of penance and reparation is the third step.

See, then, what you ought to do. Suffering is the bread which the contrite soul is content to eat. Is it so with you?

OCTOBER 22nd.

The Prodigal Son.—*Continued.*

I.

“And rising up, he came to his father.” It was “a great way off.”

What a distance there is between sin and heaven.

“His father saw him.”

God’s loving eye is ever on us, and He prevents us with His grace.

“And was moved with compassion, and running to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him.”

And is it not so with you?

When you say, “Father, I have sinned,” there are no reproaches; forgiveness is ready.

II.

“And the father said to the servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.”

Are not God's ministers swift to reclothe the soul in its baptismal robe by holy absolution? They give it back its liberty and dignity.

“A ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf.”

Sit down at the heavenly banquet.

O, incomprehensible mercy! who has ever experienced such, save from the Heart of God?

III.

“All I have is thine.”

These words were said in answer to the eldest brother, who murmured at the reception of his brother.

How true are they to you. Our Lord gives you *all*. His body, soul, and divinity are yours in communion; the love of His Heart is yours.

Rejoice, then, in His great mercy; rejoice to see others share His gifts with

you. Have no selfishness in your piety, and when life is over, and we go home indeed to our Father, you will hear Him say, amid the joys of heaven, "All I have is thine."

OCTOBER 23rd.

An Answer to Prayer.

I.

"Then Tobias sighed, and began to pray with tears. Now it happened on the same day that Sara, daughter of Raguel, continuing in prayer with tears, besought God."

"At that time the prayers of them both were heard in the sight of the Most High God."

With how much more fervour should we pray if we could but believe that our prayers are indeed "rehearsed before God." Time and space are nothing to Him. The cry of Tobias in Ninive, and Sara in Rages, mingled together before His throne.

II.

“And the holy angel of the Lord, Raphael, was sent to heal them both, whose prayers at one time were rehearsed in the sight of the Lord.”

We pray, and our prayer seems to die away into vacancy, while in reality our God is sending His angels with the golden links that bind our lives to those of others, and thus carry out His merciful designs for us.

“Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord his God.”

III.

“And Tobias, going forth, found a beautiful young man standing girded, and, as it were, ready to walk.”

Such was the form in which the archangel appeared,—youth and beauty,—for in heaven there shall be no decay nor imperfections.

God's angels are ever ready to help us. Are you “standing girded,” leading a hard, mortified life? Are you ready to do God's will, and to walk in His ways?

OCTOBER 24th.

Feast of St. Raphael.

I.

“For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord.”

When the archangel's work was done, Tobias the elder restored to sight, and Sara the happy wife of his son, he made himself known to those whom he had tended like a servant.

How can we fear or be cast down when we know that God is watching over us, though we cannot see Him, and His mighty angels are ever at hand?

II.

“And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, fear not; for when I was with you I was there by the will of God. Bless ye Him, and sing praises to Him.”

How perfectly unselfish is the angelic nature. They care for nought but the glory of their God. Their will is one

with His, and the praise of man is to them but dust.

Try, even though very far off, to imitate them, to live but for God's glory, to despise the praise of men, to be content to be forgotten and unknown, provided the will of God be done.

III.

"I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men. It is time, therefore, that I return to Him that sent me."

More fortunate, ten thousandfold, than Tobias and his children, we too use an invisible meat and drink, we are admitted to feed on the Bread of Angels.

Should not our lives, then, be angelic? should we not use the things of earth with indifference? As St. Paul says, "use this world as if we used it not," "for the fashion of this world passeth away;" and soon, very soon, shall each of us be able to say, "It is time, therefore, that I return to Him that sent me."

OCTOBER 25th.

God's Rights, and those of Cæsar.

I.

“The Pharisees, going, consulted how to ensnare Him ; and they sent disciples, saying: Master, we know Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?”

They believed our Lord to be so truthful that He could not escape their snare.

Are you *true* in all things, free from dissimulation and double dealing in thought, word, and deed? Do you try to make yourself out better than you are? Do you prefer those who praise you to those who tell you the truth?

II.

“Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the coin of the tribute.”

Would it be possible for our Lord to

call you by this terrible name ? Do you pray for humility, and self-contempt, and charity, without any real desire to possess them ?

“ Whose image and superscription is this ? ”

Your soul must bear one of two images, that of Jesus Christ, or of His enemy. Which do you bear ?

III.

“ Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Give, then, to your Lord and your God the things that are His, which you have received from Him, your body, your soul, your intellect, your will. Give Him a threefold tribute ; the love of your heart, the adoration of your lips, the mortification of your body.

Let that image be visible in you now which shall shine for all eternity.

OCTOBER 26th.

Sickness of Lazarus.

I.

"Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary, and of Martha her sister."

When all human means had failed to cure this sickness, the sisters had recourse to their Lord and beloved Friend.

Thus should we turn to Him in all our fears, difficulties, and sorrows.

II.

"His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

What a prayer was this message! how full of simple faith, hope, and trust in our Lord's love!

Go in the same way to our Lord, and you will be heard.

Are there not souls in the mortal sickness of sin, whose cure you should beg of our Lord? Say to Him: "Lord,

he whom Thou hast loved, so as to shed Thy Blood, is sick."

III.

"And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

It is not for us to know the designs of God. Whatever He sends us is the best. Be always submissive to the divine will. Do not rob our Lord of the happiness of making your sorrows part of your eternal bliss. If you have an immense trust in Him you will be patient.

Wait patiently for Him.

OCTOBER 27th.

Sickness of Lazarus.—Continued.

I.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus."

And therefore He tried them. Those

who are dearest to His Heart are generally laden with the heaviest crosses. Many souls are kept from great falls by great trials.

Your trials are a mark of our Lord's anxiety for your perfection.

He desires the angels should see that He loves you.

II.

"When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days."

We see how our Lord trained the souls of His disciples. He taught them blind obedience, entire submission of judgment.

Look into your soul, and see if you have not often rebelled against the trials of suspense and disappointment, when God seemed deaf to your prayers, or when adverse circumstances were allowed to oppress you.

Be ashamed of your distrust of your loving Lord.

III.

“Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

The death of the just is but a sleep, from which God will wake them in heaven.

Real death only exists where the soul is separated from God. Let us fear that spiritual sleep, during which we lay up nothing for eternity.

Ask your Lord to rouse you from that slumber, even at the cost of pain and suffering.

OCTOBER 28th.

The Death of Lazarus.

I.

His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep he shall do well.”

Without divine light we cannot understand heavenly things.

Do you attentively study the words of our Lord, and draw forth their mean-

ing? Do you try to interpret them so as to please yourself?

II.

“Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead.”

With what patience and sweetness our Lord taught His disciples.

Are you not often vexed when people do not understand you? Are you not impatient with the stupid and unintelligent?

III.

“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe.”

Our Lord's joy is to see us advance in the spiritual life. He allowed Lazarus to die, that He might work the great miracle of his resurrection.

Be certain, then, that if He ever seems to neglect and abandon you, He is really thinking of you with tender compassion, and ruling all things that you may attain the end for which you were created.

“Rejoice in sufferings and trials,” as

said St. Paul, "that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

OCTOBER 29th.

Our Lord's Meeting with St. Martha at Bethany.

I.

"Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him."

No one can console us but our Lord. Let us leave creatures, and go to Him. Let the tears that must flow in this our exile be shed at His feet.

Holy Job said, "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." And he had never known the Heart of Jesus.

II.

"Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

She did not murmur, she only declared

her faith and confidence in His power and love.

So should you accept the troubles of life, and go to our Lord with trust, even if heart and soul be rent in twain.

“But now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.”

True and loyal was the heart of Martha. Are you like her, believing, hoping, loving, being loved as you are?

III.

“Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again at the last day. Jesus saith to her: I am the resurrection and the life.”

What, then, can you fear, when you carry in your heart the “resurrection and the life”?

Our Lord says to you, as He did to St. Martha, “Believest thou this?”

Go and say to Him from your heart, “Yea, Lord.” Unite your will with His, and live by faith.

OCTOBER 30th.**Our Lord and St. Mary Magdalene
at Bethany.****I.**

“ She went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”

In that secret intercourse between our Lord and interior souls the world has no part. Those only who mortify their senses, and are detached, will hear His voice.

“ She riseth quickly and cometh.”

Do you, then, promptly obey His voice. Lay aside all anxiety, and offer all your sorrows to Him.

II.

“ Seeing Him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.”

It is true that when Jesus is present in the soul it can never perish.

Magdalene wept at His feet, and tears shed there are always consoled.

Carry your sufferings, then, to Him: let your heart rest at His feet.

III.

“And Jesus wept.”

To teach us that deep sorrow can exist with perfect resignation; to bless and sanctify those tears of ours which He knows but too well we must shed in this our exile.

“The Jews therefore said: Behold how He loved him.”

Gaze at your crucifix, and say, “Behold how He has loved me.” More bitter tears has He shed for you, yea, He has shed His Blood.

Ask to understand that love and those tears.

OCTOBER 31st.

The Resurrection of Lazarus.

I.

“Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre.”

The obstinacy of sinners makes the tender Heart of Jesus groan. Think of this in the hour of temptation.

“Jesus saith: Take away the stone.”

Take away the obstacles that hinder your union with Him. You must do it yourself. No one can make us holy in spite of ourselves.

II.

“And Jesus, lifting up His eyes, said: Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me.”

Always begin prayer with thanksgiving.

“And I know that Thou hearest Me always.”

Our prayers, united to those of our Lord, are certain to be heard.

“But because of the people who stand about have I said it.”

Have you, in all your words and actions, the pure intention of pleasing God?

III.

“He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth.”

His voice is victorious over death. He makes it heard sometimes amidst the tumult of the world, and souls rise up and forsake sin.

“He that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands.”

Figures of the imperfections and evil habits that bind and hinder the soul from advancing.

“Jesus saith to them: Loose him and let him go.”

Break, then, these bonds, and be master of your own passions, which is true liberty; and thus, dead indeed to sin, you will be alive in Christ your Lord.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

NOVEMBER.

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SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER 1st.

Feast of All Saints.

I.

“I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

Be grateful to God, who has crowned the companions of your exile and your misery ; has made them a help to you, and their happiness a foreshadowing of your own.

Gather close about their feet to-day, that through them God's rich gifts may

fall on you. Do not regard them as far off. The saints know, love, pity, and pray for us.

II.

"These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The saints had the same difficulties to overcome that we have, and the same helps as we.

Are you walking in their footsteps, in the way of mortification and suffering? Do you accept the daily thorns of life, that shall one day become the flowers of your everlasting crown? Courage and patience formed the saints.

III.

"For their works follow them."

Many and various were the gifts and graces God gave to His saints; but all were alike in fidelity to prayer, humility, and love of God. They never neglected little things, knowing that in each fidelity lies perfection.

Ask, then, our Lord, who is the link that binds together the saints in heaven and the just on earth, to close your heart to the vanities of this world, and fill it with an ardent longing for heaven, springing from a devoted love of His Divine Heart.

NOVEMBER 2nd.

All Souls' Day.

I.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption.”

We turn our longing eyes from the glory of the saints to the suffering souls in purgatory, where the stains of sin are being purged away, where the punishment due to the earthly, worldly spirit, to which our corruptible nature is so inclined, is being undergone; for nothing defiled can enter heaven.

Do I consider this? Have I a due horror of sin?

II.

“Now the sting of death is sin.”

Death ought to be the door that opens heaven to us; but alas! how few of us come to our death-beds ready for heaven. We fear death because we love, if not sin, imperfection and tepidity. We are not courageous in mortifying ourselves in this life, and so our good Lord is obliged to send us to the purging fires of purgatory.

Are you trying now to shorten your purgatory?

III.

“For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much.”

Our Lord has ordained that prayer made for the holy souls should shorten their time of expiation, and the Church allows us to apply in their behalf many indulgences, and the Holy Sacrifice is availing for the living and the dead.

Do you pray much and fervently for the holy souls?

“With what measure you have mea-

sured, it shall be measured to you again."

Do not wait for the time when, neglected yourself, you will mourn over your own neglect. They are in prison. Go unto them: forget them not in prayer, in time of holy Mass; and when in Holy Communion you can offer to God the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

NOVEMBER 3rd.

The Light of the World.

I.

"I am the Light of the World."

Our Lord is the Uncreated Light by His Divinity, and the Incarnate Light before whom the spirits of darkness flee away. He is the Sun of Justice, which enlightens every man.

Ought not you to be a living reflection of that light in the souls of others?

"He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness."

The soul attached to its own judgment walks in darkness, and is ever in uncertainty and anxiety.

Jesus Christ is the light of the obedient.

II.

“But shall have the light of life.”

The light that leads to perfection ; the light that shows us first the horror of sin, and then renders us fervent, and lastly detaches us from earth, that we may be united to God.

III.

“You are from beneath ; I am from above.”

Are your desires and fears, joys and affections, bent on creatures or on God ?

“You are of this world ; I am not of this world.”

Are your ideas and judgments conformed to the world or to the Gospel ?

“I have many things to speak and to judge of you.”

Are there many defects in your conduct or conversation which displease

the Heart of Jesus? As you gaze at your crucifix, and kiss it, pray that you may better know what Jesus is for you, and what you are for Him.

NOVEMBER 4th.

The Woman of Canaan.

I.

“And behold a woman of Canaan, who came out of those parts, crying out, said to Him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil.”

If you would really have the spirit of prayer, you must follow Jesus Christ, even though He be silent to you; for you know He is merciful and tender of Heart. Never is the cry of our hearts unnoticed by Him, who loves us better than a mother loves her child.

II.

“But He answered her not a word.”
See how our Lord trains the souls

that are His. His silence was to try the patience and perseverance of this faithful heart, that she might be a model to us all under the heavy trials of life.

Go, then, to your Lord in the tabernacle, and "knock" by your ardent prayers.

III.

"And His disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us."

It is easy to weary out human creatures. There are only a few that are unselfish enough to give real sympathy in our troubles.

Those who trust in creatures are ever lonely, always disappointed. But if, like this faithful woman, we continue to cry, not to creatures, but to the Creator, not to disciples, but to the Master, we shall in the end be heard, answered, and satisfied.

NOVEMBER 5th.

The Woman of Canaan.—*Continued.*

I.

“But she came and worshipped Him, saying: Lord, help me.”

Yet still He seemed deaf to her prayers.

“Who said to her: Let the children first be filled; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs.”

And then He entered into a house, as if to escape from her company; in order, says St. John Chrysostom, to show us the marvellous power that there is in a persevering prayer.

II.

“But she answered and said to Him: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children.”

Our Lord loves to see us linger at His feet.

Do you imitate this woman in fervour

and perseverance in prayer? Do you lie at your Master's feet, determined not to leave Him, being convinced that God is too good ever to repulse you?

III.

"Then Jesus, answering, said to her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt."

Her deep humility was thus rewarded; she was praised by her Saviour and Lord.

Pray, then, with confidence, hope against hope; pray imperiously, or rather *victoriously*. But only the humble can thus pray. Never draw near Holy Communion without remembering we are not worthy of the crumbs of this heavenly food. If our Lord seems deaf to your prayer, be sure it is only out of His deep tenderness He thus acts, and by persevering prayer you have power over Him.

NOVEMBER 6th.

**The Apostles return from their
Mission.**

I.

“And the Apostles, coming together unto Jesus, related unto Him all things that they had done and taught.”

They hastened to give an account to their beloved Master, and to render Him glory for their success. With what tender interest did He listen! Are you simple and candid with our Lord, and with those who stand to you in His place? Do you give God all the glory of any success you may have?

II.

“And He said to them: Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest a little.”

Not only did our Lord wish them to rest from fatigue, but still more, to rest their souls; not to forget their own spiritual needs while labouring for others.

Never let us neglect our own souls under pretext of doing good to others. The salutary custom of spending some days every year in retreat is a great means of sanctification, for then we are alone with Jesus, resting a little by His side.

III.

“For there were many coming and going; and they had not so much as time to eat.”

People often complain that in a busy distracted life they cannot be recollected or pray. Yet we see what was the habitual life of our Lord, and the souls so dear to Him, those whom He was training to perfection. Have, then, only one anxiety as to the life you lead, that it be chosen for you by God, for if it is, He will, if you so desire, make His strength perfect in your weakness.

NOVEMBER 7th.

Multiplication of the Loaves.

I.

“And they saw them going away; and many knew: and they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them.”

See how they loved Him, and left all things, houses, families, business, pleasure, to keep in His company. Is it so with you?

In listening to His word they forgot even the necessities of life. Is the world, and are all creatures, indifferent to you in comparison with Jesus Christ?

II.

“And Jesus, going out, saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.”

These people disturbed, if we may so

speak, our Lord's plan for His disciples; yet He was not angry. He is always ready for us. He never puts us off to a more convenient season. Seek after Him and listen to His teaching.

III.

“And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the hour is now past: send them away.”

We are astonished at the boldness of these disciples, thus dictating to their Divine Master. No doubt they were tired and disappointed. Do you not often act thus? Are you not ready to insist that God should let you have your own way? Are you not at times selfish in spiritual things, not caring for the good of others if it interferes with your own comfort?

NOVEMBER 8th.

Multiplication of the Loaves.—*Continued.*

I.

“But He said: Give you them to eat. And they said: Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence; and we will give them to eat.”

They thought themselves wiser than their Master. Are you ready to submit your judgment?

II.

“And He saith: How many loaves have you? They say: Five, and two fishes.”

They thought they had now proved their point; but the Master “commanded them to make them all sit down by companies.” All was to be done in order.

“And they did all eat and were filled.”
Do you trust your Lord and Master,

casting all your care upon Him, with entire submission to His will?

III.

“And they took up the leavings, twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fishes.”

What a lesson is here. No one was stinted, yet our Lord taught His apostles one great point in poverty, not to waste.

Are you most careful never to waste or spoil anything? Of everything we are only stewards: we are never free to misuse God's gifts. Love your subjection to your good Master.

NOVEMBER 9th.

The Children of Zebedee.

I.

“Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask Thou wouldst do it for us.”

We must never pray save in sub-

mission to God's will. Examine if you are not too eager about certain points.

Pray with confidence in that good God who knows better than you do what is best for you.

Alas! even in our prayers self-love is often to be found. But our Lord is thinking of our eternal interests.

II.

“And they said: Grant to us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory.”

Their minds were full of worldly things; they thought our Lord was going to establish His kingdom on earth, and they, His near relations, should share His honour.

Are you free from all ambition, from all desires of being above others?

III.

“And Jesus said to them: You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?”

It is only the mortified that will reign with Jesus.

Our sanctification depends on our imitation of His life.

“But they said to Him: We can.”

How many deceive themselves in God’s service. Do you keep the resolutions you have made, or do you say one thing and do another?

Ask grace that, like St. James and St. John, you may be faithful in the hour of trial.

NOVEMBER 10th.

The Children of Zebedee.—*Continued.*

I.

“And Jesus said to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink; but to sit on My right hand or on My left is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared.”

Do not ask for a high place in heaven, but that you may serve Jesus with deep humility and love Him much.

Be ready for the cross, and do not refuse to drink His chalice.

II.

“And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”

Their anger did not proceed from high motives, for each of them wished to be the first.

Those who are indignant with the faults of others have generally the same or worse ones in their own hearts.

Compassionate the weakness of others, and you shall find compassion for your own.

III.

“But Jesus called them to Him, and said: Whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister: and he that will be first among you shall be your servant.”

Our Lord thus taught that all ambition and desire to rule is unlike His true disciples. His obedience to priests in the Eucharist is our perpetual example.

“The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

He ministers to us still in Holy Communion; He is still our servant while we dwell on earth.

Imitate Him. Look upon yourself as the last of all; be content with the lowest place, and ask our Lord to give you grace to love it.

NOVEMBER 11th.

Parable of the Two Sons.

I.

“A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went.”

Has not God, your tender Father, commanded you to love and serve Him, to mortify your senses, to sanctify your soul, to subdue your passions? Have

you not often said, with audacity, "I will not obey Thee, my God."

Then did Jesus your Lord obtain for you the grace of repentance. Now persevere with courage.

II.

"And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said: I go, sir. And he went not."

Is not this also a true picture of you? Have you not often made promises to God which you have not kept? How little of loving obedience to the divine will has there been in you.

Look over your confessions, your communions, your retreats, and ask for an untiring zeal for the future.

III.

"Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him: The first."

We are always clear-sighted about others, but by no means so much so as regards ourselves.

"Jesus said to them: The publicans shall go into the kingdom before you."

Nothing is so hopeless as tepidity. Our Lord says terrible things to the lukewarm.

Strive, then, to be humble, faithful, obedient, and ask our Lord to fill you with holy courage.

NOVEMBER 12th.

Parable of the Vineyard.

I.

“A certain man planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round it, and let it to husbandmen, and went into a far country.”

Your soul is this vineyard, planted in God's Church, protected by a hedge which none but yourself can break down. Our Lord dresses His vineyard by His angels, but when He sends to receive the fruit, does He obtain it? Do you not rather send His messengers away empty?

II.

“He sent his son most dear to him, saying: They will reverence my son.”

Has He not sent to you Jesus, in the manger and on the cross, and again in the Blessed Sacrament? Have you revered, loved, imitated Him?

“And laying hold of him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.”

Have you not often crucified the Son of God afresh, and cast Him out of His kingdom of your heart, that your passions might reign there?

Ask pardon from your good Lord.

III.

“What, therefore, will the lord of the vineyard do? He will destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others.”

Such would be your fate if God acted with strict justice, but the mercy of Jesus Christ has saved you.

Yet life is short. If you are not in earnest God will give the vineyard to

others, and others shall have the graces which you abuse.

Ask help from our Lady that you may repair the past.

NOVEMBER 13th.

Feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka.

I.

“A spotless life is old age.”

St. Stanislaus was little more than a child when he died, yet he won the crown of high sanctity, and did a work for God which shall last throughout eternity.

How have you used the precious years of your life? Have you spent them in glorifying your Master, in gaining souls for Him?

II.

“He pleased God, and was beloved.”
What was this work he did for God?
was a holy child, and a perfect novice

of the Company of Jesus, and so the perfume of his virtues is ever fragrant in the Church, and numberless souls have been drawn by his example to love and serve their God, and will thank this blessed saint to all eternity.

III.

“Her have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth.”

The one great glory of St. Stanislaus was his love for our Lady. We can hardly think of him without thinking of her, so closely are they knit together. Well did she reward his filial love.

Are you her true child? Do you pray to her with confidence? Are you making sure that she will be with you at the hour of death?

Ask St. Stanislaus to obtain this grace for you.

NOVEMBER 14th.

Zacheus seeks to see our Lord.

I.

“And behold there was a man named Zacheus, who was chief of the publicans, and very rich; and he sought to see Jesus where he was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was of low stature.”

At first all Zacheus wanted was to “see Jesus.” We cannot in this life see our Lord visibly, but we can see and know Him in the way His merciful love has appointed.

Are you so low in merit and virtue that you cannot raise your soul above this earth?

What is it that hinders you from union with our Lord? Is it not a multitude of distracting thoughts?

Draw near to Him by humble, fervent prayer.

II.

“And running before, he climbed up

into a sycamore tree, that he might see Him, for He was to pass that way."

Trample human respect under your feet, and climb to that contempt of earthly things, and abnegation of your own will, which will enable you to perceive our Lord. Seek to see Him only, and to be seen only by Him.

III.

"And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him, and said to him: Zacheus, make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house."

Our dear Lord granted the wish that had not yet been put into words. When our desires mount up to Him like incense, and when the cry of our hearts assails the tabernacle, He comes forth eagerly to give Himself to us, and He rewards the least thing we do for Him. Imagine the surprise and joy of Zacheus.

"To-day I must abide in thy house." Our Lord says these words to every faithful soul.

Are you full of humble, fervent joy?

Far greater things are done for you than for Zacheus. He gives far more than we ask. Take, then, your desires and prayer to His Divine Heart.

NOVEMBER 15th.

Zacheus seeks to see our Lord.—

Continued.

I.

“And he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy.”

Imagine with what eagerness he made his preparations to receive our Lord. With what deep reverence he listened to His words.

How do you prepare for Holy Communion? Do you set your soul in order, and quiet your imaginations and emotions? Do you render homage with all the power of your soul?

II.

“And when all saw it, they mur-

mured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner."

Such was the hard, rash judgment of the world. It knew not that Zacheus had become a true penitent and fervent disciple.

"But Zacheus standing, said: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything I restore him fourfold."

Here was the spirit of humble reparation. How do you repair faults against charity? Be generous, like Zacheus; give our Lord fourfold.

III.

"Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house; for the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost."

Adore our Lord standing in the midst of sinners, conversing familiarly with them, and drawing them to Himself. Let this sight fill your heart with courage. If you are obedient, charitable, unselfish, you shall ever be the child of His Sacred Heart.

NOVEMBER 16th.

Blind Bartimeus.

I.

"Bartimeus, the blind man, sat by the wayside begging. And when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out: Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Those who close their eyes to the earth are prompt to recognize the presence of our Lord.

Do you ardently desire to know those defects that hide our Lord from you? Are you glad when others point them out to you?

The obedient will always walk in light; for them there is no darkness.

II.

"And many rebuked him that he might hold his peace; but he cried a great deal the more, saying: Son of David, have mercy on me."

cry to our Lord, says St. Austin,
despise the world; never to yield

to discouragement, to be indifferent to criticism, and to work on perseveringly in God's service.

"And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called."

When we thus cry to Him, He, as it were, stands to listen, and sends His grace to our aid.

III.

"And they call the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee. And he, casting off his garment, leaped up and came to Him."

Do you press forward eagerly, like this poor man? Do you cast off your cares and troubles, that your soul may fly to Jesus?

"And Jesus answering, said to him: What wilt thou that I should do to thee?"

He loves to hear us tell Him our needs and secret desires.

"And the blind man said: Lord, that I may see."

Then our dear Lord touched his eyes, and he was cured. Seek, then, to touch

Him in close union with Him in His sacraments.

Try to have your eyes opened that they may see the divine vision. Fix them on the tabernacle, and, as did the man now cured, follow Him.

NOVEMBER 17th.

Our Lord visits Nazareth.

I.

“And He came to Nazareth where He was brought up, and He went into the synagogue, according to His custom, on the Sabbath day. And He rose up to read, and the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto Him; and as He unfolded the book He found the place where it was written : The Spirit of the Lord is on me to preach the Gospel to the poor.”

These words should fill your soul with consolation and hope. Our Lord pledges Himself to make up to us for all we

renounce for His sake. If you are poor in spirit, then all the treasures of the Gospel are for you.

II.

“And many, hearing Him, were in admiration at His doctrine.”

But their admiration was a barren one. It is little use to see the beauty of our Lord’s life and teaching unless we try to copy Him.

How do you listen to His words? Do you ever censure or criticize those who speak in His name? Sometimes a smile or a gesture is enough to do this. The spirit of faith alone can preserve us.

III.

“And they said: Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?”

See with what humility our Lord took care that not even in His own country He should be above the poor. Yet He had to convert the world.

Deplore your pride and self-sufficiency, by which you strive to be thought

better than you are. Jesus was humbled to confound your pride.

“And they were scandalized in regard of Him.”

It is easy to scandalize the indocile.

Do you yield to prejudice, drawing comparisons with this person and that, as if God could not teach and help you by whomsoever He wills ?

“And He could not do any miracle there, only that He cured a few that were sick, laying His hands upon them.”

Ask Him, then, to cure your pride, to lay His divine hands on you, that you may become like Him, meek and humble of heart.

NOVEMBER 18th.

Attempt on the Life of our Lord.

I.

“And He said : Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country.”

We may well apply these words to

our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. How little honour does He receive in "His own country." We get accustomed to the daily miracle of His presence amongst us, and we often neglect to listen to the silent teaching of His Sacred Heart.

II.

"And they rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and they brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong."

Do you ever get irritated against those who represent Jesus Christ to you? Have you never been angry when the voice of conscience spoke so plainly you were forced to listen? Alas! have you not sometimes thrust out your Master from your heart by sin?

III.

"But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way."

Tradition points out the spot where the rocks opened to protect their Creator,

and where the marks are seen of His blessed feet and the folds of His robe.

See, then, how Jesus can protect His own. Never let us fear dangers in His service. When He pleases He can deliver His servants.

Patience under persecution is a mark of His disciples. Adore and love your all-powerful and most patient Lord.

NOVEMBER 19th.

**The Holy Women that followed our
Lord.**

I.

“And it came to pass afterwards that He travelled through the cities and towns, preaching and publishing the gospel of the kingdom of God, and the twelve with Him.”

The work of saving souls is the dearest to our Lord's Heart.

Are you co-operating in that work? Every one can do it. The apostolate of

example, the apostolate of prayer and self-denial, is before us all, even if we cannot help others in any other way.

II.

“And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary, who is called Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were gone forth, and Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others.”

Our Lord is so grateful for any service rendered to Him. So He has had recorded the names of the faithful women who followed Him in His hard, laborious life. And when we find that out of one thus devoted, seven devils had been cast, no one can despair of conquering faults, and becoming an instrument for good in God’s hands.

III.

“Who ministered to Him of their substance.”

Happy was the lot of those who could thus give alms to Jesus Christ.

Contemplate this great mystery,—a Creator fed by His creatures, the Lord depending on the charity of His servants; and then remember His words: “Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it to Me.”

Be generous in self-denial. Refuse nothing to His love, who gave Himself for you.

NOVEMBER 20th.

Parable of the Sower.

I.

“The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.”

The seed is the word of God, in whatever form it comes to you.

Is not our Lord in the tabernacle a perpetual Living Word of God? Do you waste graces by dissipation, by over

great attention to exterior things, the
“birds of the air?”

II.

“And other some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth, and they sprung up immediately, because they had no deepness of earth, and when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.”

What a true picture this is of superficial piety, trusting to external devotion, and having no root of mortification. Temptation comes, and this sort of piety withers away.

“And others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.”

If your heart is pierced with the thorns of unworthy fear, anxiety, and trouble, the peace of God cannot dwell in it.

III.

“And others fell on good ground, and they brought forth fruit, some an hun-

dred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold."

Let our Lord act on your soul with His grace, and it will bring forth fruit. Not the same in all, for we have different aptitudes and different vocations.

Listen to our Lord speaking to your inmost soul, especially after Holy Communion, and beg Him to make you ever docile to His inspirations.

NOVEMBER 21st.

Feast of our Lady's Presentation.

I.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God."

When our Lady was but three years old she desired to consecrate herself to God in the temple. Great was the faith of this little child, who thus left her home, her tender mother and good father, to give herself to recollection, solitude, and prayer.

Are you faithful in obeying the call of God when it leads to sacrifice?

II.

“That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

While in the temple our Lady bound herself to perpetual virginity. She obeyed the special inspiration of God in thus becoming the first of the virgin band. She knew not how she was to tread this path, but she put her whole trust in her God.

If you are called upon to do His will in difficult matters, do you obey in simple confidence in Him?

III.

“To present you holy and unspotted and blameless before Him.”

Contemplate our dear Lady as she mounts the steps of the temple, a fit type of the progress she made in virtue, ever rising higher and higher.

Is your life a continual advance? Do you go from step to step, from virtue to virtue?

Ask your sweet Mother to obtain for you a fervent will in the service of her Son. Ask her to gain for you the grace to do God's will more perfectly day by day.

NOVEMBER 22nd.

The Supper at Bethany.

I.

"Jesus, therefore, six days before the pasch, came to Bethania, where Lazarus had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made Him a supper there."

The word Bethania signifies House of obedience, and our Lord was now about to accomplish His Father's will to this end.

Do you love obedience? Do you seek to be as obedient as you can, or do you try to get your own way?

II.

"And Martha served."

We may easily suppose that Martha had a talent for serving, and willingly came to help when the principal guest was her dear Lord and Master.

Do you seek to serve that same Master on all possible occasions ?

“ But Lazarus was one of them that were at table with Him.”

Martha's place, therefore, was among the guests, but she was ready to humble herself for our Lord's sake.

Are you thus ready ?

III.

“ A great multitude of the Jews knew that He was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.”

Do not give our Lord a divided service, but seek Him only. Do not share your heart between Him and creatures ; it is too small for that. Keep close to Him all the days of your life, for has He not raised you from the death of sin ?

Heart of Jesus, make my heart like unto Thine.

NOVEMBER 23rd.

The Supper at Bethany.—Continued.

I.

“Mary, therefore, took a pound of ointment of right spikenard of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and breaking the alabaster box, she poured it out upon His Head, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

The loving Magdalene would give all she had, even the last drop, to her beloved Master.

Are you thus generous in sacrifice? Do you keep back anything from the holocaust? And is your life of self-conquest such that others love to live with you? Is the house filled with the odour of your charity and self-denial?

The unselfish are always the delight of others.

II.

“Judas Iscariot said: Why was not

this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"

When you are tempted to judge, criticize, or condemn the actions of others, you should remember that this was the conduct of the traitor.

"Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein."

He was, then, a hypocrite as well as a traitor.

Sound well, then, your motives when you blame others.

III.

"And Jesus said: Let her alone; why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon Me. What she had she hath done. She is come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also that she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

Our dear Lord once again took on Himself the defence of His loving and

faithful Magdalen. So will He defend you in the hour of your need, if you love and serve Him. He is the most faithful of Masters, the truest of Friends. Does not He who can so nobly reward merit a generous service?

“Oh, make me love Thee more and more.”

NOVEMBER 24th.

Our Lord weeps over Jerusalem.

I.

“And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it.”

The Heart of Jesus was so full of tenderness. He wept when He thought of the fate of the beautiful city lying at His feet, as He looked down from the Mount of Olives. In after days a church was built on this spot, and called “Church of the Tears of Jesus.”

Do you weep for the sins that once ruined the fair city of your own soul, and which are daily ravaging the souls of others?

II.

"If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes."

Is our Lord saying these words to you? Are you indeed seeking to know, in this your day, the short time of your life, what are His designs on you? Are you hiding anything from yourself, turning a deaf ear to correction and warning and the secret whispers of your conscience, refusing to see a sacrifice lest you have to make it?

III.

"How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate."

Our Lord's mercy and tenderness has never failed.

Have you refused His graces? Have you shrunk back from close communion with Him "under His wings"? Are you now mourning your desolation?

But with you it is not too late ; it is still " your day." Mingle your tears, then, with those of your dearest Lord. Resolve to refuse nothing He shall ask from you, and let this tender Heart be your refuge in life and in death.

NOVEMBER 25th.

The Gentiles ask to see Jesus.

I.

" Now there were certain Gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival day ; these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."

It was a holy and just desire, expressed with so much respect.

Do you seek to see Jesus? Do you ask those who know Him well to teach you that divine art, or are you contented in cold indifference ?

II.

" Philip cometh and telleth An-

drew. Again Andrew and Philip told Jesus."

They did not dare to refuse the request, because they knew how our Lord loved souls.

Do you pray for others as you ought? Do you tell Jesus of their needs? Do you plead their cause with Him? And do you, in your turn, seek the intercession of others?

III.

"But Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."

When you see the eager desire of these poor strangers to see our Lord, ask yourself how you use the gifts of living constantly in His presence, of seeing Him under the veils of His sacrament, of receiving Him often within your heart.

In thus visiting and showing Himself to you, is the Son of Man glorified? What fruit is produced in you by these many gifts and graces?

Ask our Lord to make you understand what you ought to do.

NOVEMBER 26th.

The Grain of Wheat.

I.

“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Our Lord was speaking of Himself, says St. Austin. He is the celestial seed that fell into the earth of our mortal nature, died upon the cross, and brought forth the eternal fruit of man's redemption.

By baptism you became a grain in the field of the Church; by suffering you ought to become the “bread of Jesus Christ.” But to do this you must die to self. Be brave and courageous, and love to be beneath the feet of others.

II.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.”

When mortification presents itself, "hate your life," and accept it. Die to natural satisfaction, renounce your own will on earth that you may keep it in eternity.

III.

"Now is my soul troubled."

You are often troubled at the sight of a humiliation, or disgrace, or blame. Do not be surprised, but bear it patiently in union with our Lord.

"Father, save me from this hour."

So may you also pray in the time of anguish.

"But for this cause I came unto this hour."

Say to yourself, "I was created that I might suffer on this earth, and rejoice for ever in heaven. My sadness shall soon pass, my reward never." Then can you not say with all your heart, "Thy will be done in me."

NOVEMBER 27th.

Parable of the Ten Virgins.

. I.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride.”

Are not you invited to the “marriage supper of the Lamb?” Are you prepared for it?

“And five of them were foolish, and five wise.”

Among which of the two classes are you? What use do you make of the precious time God has given you?

II.

“But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them.”

Remark that they were all virgins, all of the same rank, all had lamps, the same graces, the same means of salvation; but some did not use these means, did not pray, though they knew what prayer was, did not mortify and humble

themselves, though they knew what humility and mortification can do.

III.

“ But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps.”

They were obedient, prayerful, meek, ready for self-sacrifice, to be corrected, and to suffer, and so their lamps were ever burning with the fire of love for the Bridegroom of their souls, whose coming they thirsted for.

Pray to have your portion with them.

NOVEMBER 28th.

Parable of the Ten Virgins,—*Continued.*

I.

“ And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept.”

For death shall come to all, the good and the bad, the fervent and the tepid.

“ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him.”

And all shall hear that cry, and have to obey it. One day you must stand before Him, and face the truth.

Oh, sweetest Jesus, be to me in that hour, not a Judge, but a Saviour.

II.

"Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

At that hour no one can help, the hour of grace is passed. We cannot hide ourselves under the shadow of a good outward life if our hearts have not been right with God.

III.

"Now whilst they went to buy, the begroom came."

The saints and angels no longer can assist; there is not time to amend.

“And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.”

That door which shall never open for those who are not waiting.

“But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us.”

That indeed will be the bitter cry of the soul who has awaked too late from the sleep of sin and tepidity.

“But he answering, said: Amen, I say to you, I know you not.”

O terrible words. They were virgins, they had been outwardly devoted to His service. Their life's business had been to wait for Him, and now He knows them not. Then let us ask for mercy, and strive so to know our Lord here that He may recognize us in eternity.

NOVEMBER 29th.

The Voice in the Temple.

I.

“ Father, glorify Thy name.”

These words, uttered by our Lord in the temple, ought to be ever on your lips and in your heart. They ought to be your help and consolation in the hour of temptation and trial. This is your work on earth, that you may promote the glory of God.

II.

“ A voice, therefore, came from heaven: I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

How had God been glorified in Jesus Christ? By His humble birth, His exile in Egypt, His life of contempt and labour, His persecutions, poverty, suffering, submission. And your means of glorifying Him are the same.

III.

“The multitude, therefore, that stood and heard, said that it thundered; others said: An angel spoke to him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes.”

It came to show us how God is our “very present help in trouble,” how He is watching every struggle, listening to every prayer, and how, if we only put our trust in Him, we shall conquer all difficulties, overcome all enemies, and reign with Him for ever.

NOVEMBER 30th.

The Voice in the Temple.—Continued.

I.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said signifying what death He should die.)”

Our Lord was lifted up that we might ever be raising our weary eyes to Him.

There is a sacred virtue in His cross which draws hearts to Him.

Draw near, then, to Jesus crucified, and let Him work His will in you.

II.

“Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not.”

You have the light of humility. “To humble souls God sends the light.” You have the light of obedience; follow where it shall lead you. You have the light of poverty; let it teach you to strip yourself of unnecessary things. Use, then, well the light God has given you.

III.

“These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.”

Love to be hidden, to be in an obscure position; fly from the praise and notice of men; love to be hidden with Him who conceals Himself in the tabernacle.

Ask from His Sacred Heart the rest and safety that comes to those who forget self and imitate Him.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE

Method of St. Ignatius.

DECEMBER.

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SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR DECEMBER.

DECEMBER 1st.

ADVENT SUNDAY.

**The Eternal Generation of Jesus
Christ.**

I.

“In the beginning was the Word.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word, and as the Word, He is by nature the eternal thought and image of God. He is called the Word of the Father, to teach us that He is divine, the source of all truth, the splendour of eternal glory.

Do you belong in very truth to the Incarnate Word of God?

“And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Do you live in God by Jesus Christ?

II.

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."

All was created by infinite wisdom.

Recognize with lively faith that from the Word Incarnate you have all you possess and all you are.

Glorify the power and goodness that made you out of nothing, and that preserves your life.

What are you doing to know, love, and possess for ever that God who has thus chosen you ?

III.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

God sees His Son in creatures, and the life of the Son is the light to lead us to a blessed eternity.

Seek after Jesus with a simple heart. Be docile and humble.

You are in the Word, and by Him you have life.

Strive, then, to live a life that is truly divine.

DECEMBER 2nd.**The Decree of the Incarnation.****I.**

“The same was in the beginning with God.”

God created man for eternal happiness, but man has too often prevented His merciful designs from taking effect.

Have you kept your baptismal innocence? Are you striving now after union with God?

II.

“And the light shineth in darkness.”

There was but one satisfaction that could be made to God after original sin. Who could ever have imagined what that satisfaction was to be?

The eternal incomprehensible love of God for man was the cause of the Incarnation.

Do you try to give your love in return to the Incarnate Word?

III.

“And the darkness did not comprehend it.”

God Himself, then, offered the satisfaction. It was decreed that the Word should take our flesh, and efface our iniquities.

Strive, then, to imitate His humility, and to efface yourself. Have a great fear of grieving His Sacred Heart by your unfaithfulness.

DECEMBER 3rd.

Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

I.

“What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

At the age of twenty-eight Francis Xavier was a brilliant young man of the world, distinguishing himself at the Paris university, and likely to attain great worldly glory. He forsook all this for an apostolic life.

Will you not follow him, going straight forward to do God's will, and fighting against your defects and faults ?

II.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Francis Xavier gave up the world, and set himself to conquer his pride. He submitted like a child to his superiors, and he practised daily mortification, and thus he became humble, and in the end was exalted as a great saint.

Try, like he did, to humble yourself.

III.

"I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In the midst of all his immense labours and cares, St. Francis Xavier lived in close union with our Lord. "Those who love the cross," said he, "will desire a life of suffering; and to be without the cross will be to them a torture."

Bear, then, your cross with joy; think

often of Jesus Christ; labour for His love's sake; and ask the grace to die, as did St. Francis Xavier, full of that love.

DECEMBER 4th.

The Redemption of the World.

I.

"That He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil."

Lucifer was full of pride at having brought about the fall of man.

God resolved to confound his pride by means of man, his victim. By the Incarnation Satan's empire was destroyed.

What strength, then, has God given you to overcome sin! Yet fear and detest that pride which made Lucifer fall.

II.

"And might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to slavery."

God, seeing our misery, came down from heaven, and clothed Himself in our clay. He offers us in exchange a share of His bright heaven.

How deep should be our gratitude, for as the way to heaven is the imitation of Jesus, has it not become clear and easy?

Hasten, then, to tread in those divine footsteps.

III.

“For nowhere doth He take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.”

With what wonderful joy and consolation do we behold the great debt of our fallen race paid by the Man-God!

Do not be ungrateful for this immense mercy. You cannot doubt how God has loved you, and desires your salvation.

Endeavour to give Him your whole heart in return.

DECEMBER 5th.**The Promise of the Redeemer.****I.**

“Therefore as by the offence of one, unto all men to condemnation: so also by the justice of one, unto all men unto justification of life.”

If God had so willed, the fall of man would have been eternal, like that of the angels.

What a terrible change was wrought by one sin! Death instead of immortality; labour and pain instead of the delights of Eden; and the loss of eternal bliss. But God, instantly after the fall, promised the remedy.

Render Him thanks for His loving-kindness.

II.

“In the promise of God he staggered not by distrust, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.”

The world waited four thousand years

for the Redeemer ; but God sent a long chain of prophets to announce His coming, and all men could be saved by virtue of the merits of Christ. He was the hope and the Desire of all nations.

Is He now your only hope, and treasure, and love ?

III.

“Most fully knowing that whatsoever He has promised He is able also to perform.”

Consider that vast multitude that died without knowing our dear Lord. Adore His goodness, for you are in the bosom of the Catholic Church, you are in another paradise, and your Food is the Fruit of the Tree of Life.

Try to make your next communion with the fervour with which the saints of the old law would have made it.

DECEMBER 6th.**The Humility of the Incarnate Word.****I.**

“Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought.”

Our Lord chose poverty, suffering, and a shameful death, to show us the terrible nature of sin, that demanded such expiation, and also to give us an example. He will never let any one suffer so much as He did.

Will you not, then, be patient amidst the thorns of life?

II.

“For unto this are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps.”

The Incarnate Word accepted all His sufferings as a most glorious sacrifice to
r to His Eternal Father.

Your life should be like His, for you too must suffer and die.

By means of the cross you can attain eternal bliss. Do not fear, then, to bear the marks of your Saviour.

III.

“Whom, not having seen, you love.”

God humbled Himself in the Incarnation, yet still more so in the Eucharist; and this last means of annihilation He has accepted for very few, for all those who lived before His Incarnation knew not of this; and now how few there are who adore and love this divine mystery.

Have you, then, such devotion and such love as may make reparation for the cold neglect of others? Ask for it from the Incarnate Word of God.

DECEMBER 7th.**The Predestination of our Lady to the
Divine Maternity.****I.**

“I will bless her, and of her I will give a son.”

Having resolved to become Incarnate, God chose for His Mother a young virgin, named Mary, and prepared her for her great destiny. She was raised as high as a creature could be raised, and closely united to the Adorable Trinity. By her divine Maternity our Lady acquired the rights of a Mother over her Divine Son, and has the power of commanding Him.

Put your trust, then, in her protection.

II.

“The Almighty hath quite filled me with bitterness.”

Mary was predestinated also to imitate her Son more than any other being,

and by her life of sorrow to contribute to the salvation of man.

Mary, like Jesus, ascended by a path of sorrows to eternal glory.

See, then, that the crosses God sends you are the measure of His love and grace for you.

III.

“For she shall lead me soberly in my paths, and shall preserve me by her power.”

All the favours that our Lady had were because she was near to Jesus; and you will also receive graces and favours if you draw near to Him in Holy Communion.

Ask our Lady to prepare your heart for your next communion, and to help you to thank Him when He comes to you.

DECEMBER 8th.**Feast of the Immaculate Conception
of Mary.****I.**

"As the lily among thorns."

The first and greatest grace that God could give to the chosen Mother of His Son was to preserve her from original sin.

Adore the divine wisdom, which would not suffer Mary to be for one instant under the devil's power; the divine love which so enriched her soul; the divine sanctity which thus prepared the tabernacle for the Incarnate Word.

II.

"I to my beloved, and my beloved to me."

Admire the fidelity of our Lady. The angels rebelled; our first parents fell from their innocence; Mary alone persevered in humble, obedient love.

Have a horror of the smallest stain. Never say "It is only a little sin." Ask help from our Immaculate Lady.

III.

"A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me."

God did not exempt our Lady from suffering or death. It is a great lesson for us to see our Mother subjected to poverty, labour, and death, since we see these things are not simply a punishment for sin, but a means to preserve us from it, and to obtain merit.

Do you wish to suffer less than our Mother? Away from her life must be an exile full of tears. Confide in her, be courageous, and you shall reign with her in heaven.

II.

"For all gold in comparison of her is as a little sand."

Think of the sacrifice made by Joachim and Anna, when they gave up their child to the service of the temple. They lost the one joy of their lives.

Never hesitate when God asks something of you. Be ready to give up all to Him.

III.

"I was glad at the things that were said to me: We will go into the house of the Lord."

We can imagine our Lady saying these words at her presentation.

Do you go up with joy to the temple of the Lord? Do you hasten with heartfelt gratitude to receive your God in Holy Communion?

Ask our Lady to make your heart like hers, simple, pure, and holy; and then your union with Jesus and Mary will be complete.

DECEMBER 11th.**Our Lady's Girlhood.****I.**

"Glorious things are spoken of thee."

Mary grew in grace, beauty, and wisdom in the shadow of the sanctuary. Every day her offering to God grew more perfect.

Give yourself to God, with all the powers of your mind and soul. Do not hinder Him from carrying out His divine designs on you.

II.

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved."

Mary's life as a girl consisted in labour, prayer, and obedience. She was not anxious about the future. She trusted God entirely, and only sought to do His will.

Strive in every deed to imitate your Mother. Choose at least one virtue of hers, and resolve to attain it.

III.

“All the glory of the king’s daughter is from within.”

Learn, then, much from the hidden life of Mary. Ask her to teach you how to give yourself perfectly to Jesus Christ. When nature rebels, go to the tabernacle, and remember that troubles, afflictions, and sacrifices, are the steps by which you will mount up to union with your Lord.

Say with confidence, “I will dwell in the Heart of my Lord with my Mother.”

DECEMBER 12th.

**Prediction of the Birth of St. John
the Baptist.**

I.

“But the angel said: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard.”

Zachary, — God knows us each by name, and His providence takes care

of the smallest detail of our lives. Fear not,—God always wishes us to have confidence.

“Thy prayer is heard.”

Put your desires into the Heart of Jesus, and your wants into His hands, and believe that God will bless all for His glory and our salvation.

II.

“Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son.”

Our good God grants even temporal favours when they are good for us.

“And thou shalt have joy and gladness.”

God mingles consolations with the bitterness of our exile, to increase our courage.

“For he shall be great before the Lord.”

God's gifts are always to bring about our sanctification. How foolish, then, to feed our vanity about them, and thus destroy them.

III.

“He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.”

After long years of waiting, Zachary learnt his prayer was granted. Never, then, be discouraged if God seems silent to you.

Discouragement is the fruit of self-love, and the means used by the devil to destroy confidence in prayer.

DECEMBER 13th.

Feast of St. Lucy.

I.

“In thy comeliness and thy beauty go forth; proceed prosperously and reign.”

The history of St. Lucy is brief, but full of wonderful lessons. She is distinguished first by her devotion and love for St. Agatha, who had preceded her to heaven.

Have you a real, loving faith in the intercession of the saints? Do you love them as your best and truest friends, and have recourse to them with full confidence?

II.

“God shall help her with His countenance.”

St. Lucy was threatened by her persecutors with insult worse than death; but these threats could not terrify her, for her trust was rooted in God. No one, she said, could touch her soul or bend her will; these belonged to herself and her God.

Are you ever afraid of temptations, shrinking from doing your duty for fear you should fall?

Ask St. Lucy to obtain for you a steadfast will.

III.

“Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with joy and gladness.”

And so at last the crown was won.

The tyrant's threats came to nothing. Angels took care of St. Lucy. Tortures and death were soon over, and her beautiful soul soared on high to her Spouse and her King.

Lift up your heart, then, and see if heaven is not worth centuries of earth's vain joys; if it is not well and good to suffer here a little, that you may have in eternity your "lot amidst the saints."

DECEMBER 14th.

St. Gabriel's Message.

I.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary. And the angel said unto her: Hail, full of grace."

These words were addressed to a poor young girl praying in an obscure town.

And the whole court of heaven was listening.

“Full of grace,” for herself, for us, and for all our wants.

II.

“Blessed art thou among women.”

At these astonishing words our Lady was “troubled,” and “thought with herself.” She did not answer hastily, and praise and honour gave her no pleasure.

Do you dread and fly from praise? Do you think before you speak? Do you cherish a spirit of recollection and prayer?

III.

“Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.”

We should never fear what God sends us, even if it be sorrow. If God loves us, and we possess His grace, we have nothing to desire here below.

You, miserable as you are, have found grace before God. But do you correspond with it, as did our Lady? Do

you indeed feel after Holy Communion that the "Lord is with you?"

Beg of Him to stay with you in all your actions, in all your trials, in all your life.

DECEMBER 15th.

Our Lady's Answer.

I.

"How shall this be done, seeing I know not man?"

The Immaculate one, who by special inspiration had consecrated her virginity to God, would not renounce that blessed state even to be Queen of Heaven.

How jealously should we watch over holy purity, both in ourselves and in those who may be committed to our charge.

"Mother most pure, pray for us."

II.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

The news of the angel only deepened the humility of Mary. She accepted the will of God, and offered herself to suffer all that He willed her to bear in her share in the redemption.

Mother most humble, pray for us.

III.

"Be it done unto me according to thy word."

Our Lady gave up herself wholly to God. She knew that for her henceforth there should be no rest, since she was to share His life who came to give Himself for us.

Is your heart full of gratitude to your unselfish Mother? Are you truly devoted to her service? Are you her loving child, imitating her as far as possible?

Mother most perfect, pray for us.

DECEMBER 16th.**The Incarnation of the Word.****I.**

“The Word was made Flesh.”

As soon as Mary had given her consent, the Holy Spirit formed in her, of her pure blood, the Humanity of the Word, and the Son of God was made like unto us, and Jesus became the Mediator between God and man.

Adore Jesus in the womb of Mary, and say, “My Lord and my God.”

II.

“And dwelt amongst us.”

The first intention of the Word made Flesh was to give to God worthy glory and worship. When Jesus became man, God was more glorified than He had ever been by the angels in heaven. Every thought and action of Jesus was of infinite price in His eyes.

The soul of our Saviour made a perfect oblation of itself to fulfil all the

eternal decrees concerning the life and Passion of the Messias.

III.

“ And dwelt amongst us.”

The Son of God came from heaven to do the will of His Father, and He had no other desire. But He became incarnate also for us.

“ And for them do I sanctify Myself.”

We are sanctified by His perfect oblation.

Unite your feeble offering to Him, yea, rather offer Him your Saviour to God the Father, and you will do more than the angels can do in heavenly adoration.

DECEMBER 17th.

The Incarnation of the Word.—

Continued.

I.

“ He came unto His own.”

Jesus Christ is still upon the earth, dwelling in our midst. In the Eucharist He perpetuates His Incarnation.

He gives us the love that was made visible to us in the Incarnation.

How do you prepare for Holy Communion? Do you ever go in a cold, indifferent manner by routine?

II.

“The world knew Him not.”

In the Incarnation God gave His Son to all men. In Holy Communion Jesus gives Himself wholly and entirely to each of us.

What do you give Him in return,—all? or do you keep back part? Some faults you are too idle to correct, some pleasure you are too slow to sacrifice?

III.

“But as many as received Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God.”

In silence and solitude Jesus dwelt with Mary, giving her a wonderful power over Him.

In recollection and detachment from creatures we should draw near to Holy

Communion, and then we too shall have marvellous power over His Divine Heart.

Give yourself to the Incarnate Word without reserve.

DECEMBER 18th.

The Life of Jesus in Mary.

I.

“Holiness and majesty in His sanctuary.”

For nine months the Incarnate Word was hidden in the womb of Mary. He reigned there with the same glory and power as in heaven. It was the sanctuary of His Divine Majesty.

Our Lady could truly say, “All my things are Thine, and Thine are mine.”

II.

“The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle.”

Jesus Christ filled the soul of His Mother with graces no other creature

could receive, and He made her Mother of His Church. He has loved no one so much as Mary.

Ask her to give you her Heart to love your God and Saviour, and be so detached from creatures that at Holy Communion you can say to Him, "All that is Thine is mine, because all that is mine is Thine."

III.

"Grace is poured forth on thy lips; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever."

Jesus hidden in the womb of Mary was the moving principle of her life. Mary, perfectly united to Him, acted by Jesus and for Him. Her senses, her mind, her will, and her faculties, were entirely occupied with Him. She lived in God; and grace finding in her no obstacle, enlightened her soul and deepened more and more her sanctity.

Such in its degree ought to be the effect of Holy Communion on you.

Let your Mother dispose of your will and inclinations, so that you may be *one* with Jesus and Mary.

DECEMBER 19th.

Our Lady and St. Elizabeth.

I.

“And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the mountainous country with haste.”

Our Lady conquered the natural fear of such a journey, and went to her cousin St. Elizabeth.

What sweet charity! She went “with haste,” that is, she made no delay, she did not hesitate, she was prompt in her duty, she did not perform her actions in a slow, reluctant, unwilling manner.

II.

“And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.”

The meeting of the two mothers, one called in her old age to bring forth the precursor of the Messiah, and the other in her early youth having within her the Incarnate God, was a beautiful sight to the angels.

Ask our Lady to come to you, and to bring her Jesus with her, that you may become like Him, and like herself.

III.

“When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb.”

Our Lord hastened to sanctify St. John the Baptist; and His first work on earth was to be shared by His Mother, in order to show us that she was to be the mediatrix with God, the channel of grace to our souls.

Go to her, then, with great confidence, and ask her to prepare your soul for close union with Jesus.

DECEMBER 20th.

Our Lady and St. Elizabeth.—Continued.

I.

“And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”

Extraordinary were the graces brought by the visit of Jesus and Mary.

See, then, if you cannot receive great graces when our Lord comes into your heart. Ask our Lady's help, that this may be the case with you.

II.

“And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?”

Elizabeth humbled herself at once before the youthful Maiden bearing the hidden God.

Ponder on the greatness of your God,

and your own nothingness. Be astonished that you are allowed to serve and honour the Mother of the Lord.

III.

“And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.”

Our Lord now began to manifest Himself.

But for how long a time have not you known Him, yea, and received Him into your heart? Has He sanctified you? Has He found your heart that of a simple and loving child, or has He found a proud, indocile spirit? If it be the latter, ask for the grace to change it, that the divine fire of humility and charity may burn within you.

DECEMBER 21st.

The Song of our Lady.

I.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord."

When Elizabeth had thanked God, our Lady raised her voice; her soul soared up to God; she proclaimed that her habitual occupation was to praise her Creator. What a lovely sound the singing of our Lady must have been.

Try in spirit to hear your Mother's clear, full tones, teaching you to *praise God*.

II.

"My spirit hath rejoiced."

Our Lady was full of spiritual joy, which is quite independent of the happiness of earth. Mary did not rejoice in her own glory or dignity, but only in the glory God was receiving from His Divine Son.

"In God my Saviour."

She forgets herself, she depends solely on her God.

Oh, do you lose sight of self, and belong to God only.

III.

“My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

This should be the cry of your heart after Holy Communion, for communion is so like the Incarnation that never can our lips sufficiently thank God for it.

Open your soul, then, to joy, for pure joy can only be found in union with Jesus Christ. Forget, then, yourself, and your own interests; give up yourself to the joy of possessing God.

DECEMBER 22nd.

The Song of our Lady.—*Continued.*

I.

“Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.”

Our Lady was for ever humbling her-

self. The higher God raised her the more she lowered herself.

When you have a deep sense of your own nothingness and misery, self-love will grow weaker in you, whatever may be your position. There is as much vanity in denying the gifts of God as in taking the merit of them for ourselves, as if we could do without them. True poverty of spirit makes us crave humbly for these gifts.

II.

“For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.”

As her prophetic gaze beheld the coming ages of the world, our Lady glorified God all the more for all that through her He should do.

Blessed indeed was Mary, poor in spirit, meek towards all men, mourning over the sins of the world, hungering and thirsting for the glory of her Son; most merciful, making peace betwixt God and man, most pure of heart, and

bearing the bitterest persecutions for Christ's sake.

III.

"For He that is mighty hath done great things to me."

Mary declares that all in her, and done by her, is from God.

He has done great things for you also. He called you to close union with Himself. He gives Himself to be your Food.

Humble yourself at the little fruit these great things have produced in you, and ask our Lady to obtain for you faith and love.

DECEMBER 23rd.

The Dream of St. Joseph.

I.

"When Mary His Mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

St. Joseph, being the chosen servant

of the Lord, had to endure great suffering. The mystery of the Incarnation was not revealed to him at once. Great was his anguish and perplexity concerning our Lady.

Learn to be patient under trial, even when all seems dark and hopeless.

II.

“Whereupon Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things.”

Great was this mystery. Our dear Lady was called upon to bear shame instead of honour in her virginal maternity, and her faithful spouse thought he was called to part with his dearest treasure. But see how tender he was towards her, how slow to act, how ready to sacrifice himself.

Are you slow in judging others? Do you try to shield them as much as possible, and to make excuses for them?

III.

“Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

Thus did God console His own; and if you are ever resigned to His holy will He will console you often, even in this your exile, and give you strength to walk fearlessly on to heaven.

DECEMBER 24th.

The Journey to Bethlehem.

I.

“And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city.”

In simple obedience Mary and Joseph obeyed this hard command, the whim of a heathen emperor.

And, after beholding that example, can you refuse to obey those who have authority over you, because you dislike their orders, think them unreasonable or unjust?

II.

“And Joseph also went up out of the city of Nazareth to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.”

Who can imagine the suffering of St. Joseph, in seeing our Lady toiling towards Bethlehem? Their poverty precluded him from making the journey easy to her.

Tradition says they had with them an ox and an ass, and we may well believe our Lady rode upon the ass, and so, bearing within her God Incarnate, she passed along the land His hand had made.

Humble yourself, and be ashamed for your impatience under fatigue and trials.

III.

“There was no room for them in the inn.”

Bethlehem was crowded with visitors. The rich had the first choice, and so there was no room for Mary and Joseph, for they were poor, and being poor, they were despised and unnoticed. No one cared what became of them, no one pitied the young Mother; they were too busy waiting on the rich.

Which do you prefer,—riches, with their comforts and honours; or poverty, with its privations and contempt? It must be the latter, if you would be like Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus.

DECEMBER 25th.

The Birth of Jesus Christ.

I.

“Her days were accomplished that she should be delivered.”

It was in the year 4004, and, accord-

ing to tradition, on December 25th, when at midnight, on Saturday, Jesus our God and Saviour came into this world, leaving the tabernacle of His pure Mother's womb, where He had tarried nine months; and our dear Lady, who brought Him forth with none of Eve's pain or sorrow, adored Him in joyful rapture.

Adore Him with all your heart.

II.

"And wrapped Him in swaddling clothes."

Behold that little Child, so weak and feeble, clothed in our humanity, trembling with cold, unable to help Himself, dependent on His Mother's care,—and it is our God, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And He came to you to make you love Him, to give you the riches of heaven in exchange for the cold welcome earth had for Him.

Will you refuse to love Him ?

III.

“And laid Him in a manger.”

This poor manger was the chosen throne of the new-born King.

Can you, then, love Him, and wish for honour, high estate, esteem of men?

People go long distances now to venerate part of this sacred manger preserved in Rome.

But you have Jesus lowly in the tabernacle, in the midst of you. He stretches out His hands to you, begging for your love.

Go, then, to His feet; prepare for Him a sweet resting-place in your heart. Ask St. Joseph, and ask your Mother, by the joy of their Christmas night, to help you.

DECEMBER 26th.

The Birth of Jesus Christ.—Continued.

I.

“Keeping the night watches.”

Our Lord was born at night, for He, the Light of the world, came to lighten “them that sat in darkness.”

Is your soul ever full of darkness, doubts, and anxieties? Go, then, to Jesus for light. The rays from the manger will illuminate every submissive soul, and will teach you, not only what you need to know, but what you ought to do.

II.

“A multitude of the heavenly host, praising God.”

The angels came to adore their King, to pour forth their song of joy and gratitude.

Join yourself to them. Ask those holy angels to teach you how to adore

your Jesus in the manger and on the altar.

III.

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.”

This is the gift our dear Lord brought us at once, peace. Happiness, joy, freedom from pain, is for heaven, but peace is for earth. All who will may have it.

Do you desire it? Go and seek it in the manger; be poor in spirit, obedient, charitable, and you shall have peace that passeth understanding.

DECEMBER 27th.

Feast of St. John the Evangelist.

I.

“One of the disciples whom Jesus loved.”

The reason why our Lord loved St. John with an especial love was that he was a virgin. We have seen how He

would be born only of a virgin mother conceived without sin.

Would you, then, be loved by Jesus?
Strive after purity of soul.

II.

“That disciple whom Jesus loved.”

He was the chosen friend of the Divine Heart, and therefore he became like unto his Master. He, who once wanted to call down fire from heaven to punish sinners, became meek and humble of heart.

Do you long to be humble, gentle, pitiful? keep close to Jesus Christ.

III.

“Woman, behold thy son.”

St. John was the first and chief of the children of Mary. He was her guardian and protector.

Do you wish to show your love to Jesus? Distinguish yourself by your love for Mary. Promote her honour, glorify her name, imitate her virtues, and you too shall be a disciple whom Jesus loves.

DECEMBER 28th.

The Shepherds at Bethlehem.

I.

“And there were in the same country shepherds watching over their flocks.”

The first persons to hear of our Saviour's birth were shepherds, poor, laborious, ignorant men. The great, the learned, the rich, slumbered on, and knew nothing of the great mystery.

It is always the same lesson. God hath chosen the poor.

II.

“And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear.”

The humble are always full of fear of God and reverence for His messengers.

“And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy.”

The obedient soul puts away its fear

when God speaks. The shepherds did not answer, they believed.

So do you hope, love, and live for Jesus.

III.

“This day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.”

They were to find Him bearing the marks of the life He had chosen; bound by swaddling bands, for He had given up His own will, by the hands of Mary and Joseph, to His heavenly Father; and He was lying in a manger, for He had chosen a life of poverty and mortification, and finally a harder bed than the manger, the wood of the cross.

Hasten, then, to the tabernacle, to adore your Lord and God. Ask Him to bend your will to His, and to repose in the manger of your poor heart.

DECEMBER 29th.**Visit of the Shepherds.****I.**

"The shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass."

They were not told to go, but they could not rest till they had done so.

Do you try to anticipate the will of those who govern you, instead of giving an unwilling, slow obedience?

II.

"And they came with haste."

How prompt and eager they were in their obedience. Delay is often fatal when we have a divine inspiration. Had they delayed they would not have been the first to worship the Infant God.

Learn to obey the will of God with joyful alacrity.

III.

"And they found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger."

They fell down and adored the Messias, so long promised to the world.

But you need not envy them. They saw with the eyes of faith in that little Child their Saviour and their God ; and we by faith see our God hidden in the Eucharist.

Adore Him, then ; love Him with all your heart ; give Him your life's devotion.

DECEMBER 30th.

Return of the Shepherds.

I.

“ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.”

Their hearts were filled with gratitude for the grace that had been given to them. Nothing will obtain fresh graces for you so much as gratitude for those you have received.

Be fervent in thanksgiving.

II.

"And all they that heard wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds."

But of those who heard and wondered few cared to share their happiness. Their hearts were taken up with earthly things. There are many men who believe, but their faith is dead.

Be not negligent and tepid in God's service. Be fervent.

III.

"But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart."

Our Lady bore the Incarnate Word but nine months in her womb, but all her life she bore Him in her Heart, always thinking of Him, reflecting on His words, studying His actions, contemplating His sufferings.

You ought thus to imitate her. Ponder on the example of Jesus Christ, that you may become like unto Him. Ponder over the humiliation of the crib, and you will not fear the humiliations of life.

DECEMBER 31st.**A Visit to Bethlehem.****I.**

"Let us go over to Bethlehem."

Come in spirit to the manger, to see how God has loved the world. Bring with you the sins of the year. How many they are, how unfaithful you have been to grace, how negligent in God's service. Humble yourself, and be covered with shame before your humble Lord.

II.

"For this day is born to you a Saviour."

Think of all God has done for you this year. Life, health, strength, food, and raiment, He has given. And for your soul holy thoughts, help from others, many absolutions, and above all, many times He has come Himself into your unworthy soul.

Prepare for your next communion in

a fervent spirit of reparation for the tears that Jesus shed for you in the crib.

III.

“ For He shall save His people from their sins.”

That little Child smiling in the manger shall finish His life of labour on the cross.

Be thankful, then, for all the troubles and sufferings of this year, because they have made you more like to Jesus. Your whole life should be like that of your Saviour, a preparation for death. How the years are flying past! Eternity is at hand. There is but one thing for us to do,—to serve Jesus Christ, and to love Him above all things.





